

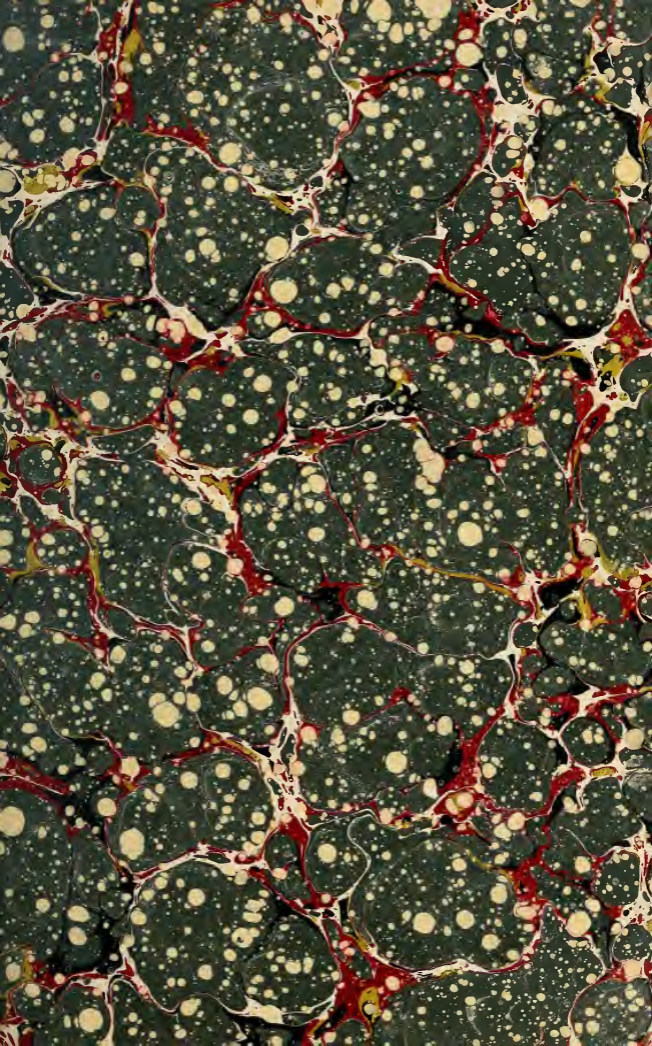
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THE WORKS
OF
THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

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VOLUME VI.

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BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL
ESSAYS.

BY
THOMAS DE QUINCEY.



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PREFACE.



[THE essays in the present volume are mainly biographical, but include some which are quite as closely allied to history, in the case of persons the interest in whom is dependent upon their prominence in historic movements. Those upon Shakspeare, Goethe, and Schiller, were contributed to the seventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica. De Quincey's own estimate of the article on Shakspeare may be inferred from the following letter which he wrote to the Editor of the Encyclopædia:—

“ July 16, 1838.

“ No paper ever cost me so much labor: parts of it have been recomposed three times over. And thus far I anticipate your approval of this article, that no one question has been neglected which I ever heard of in connection with Shakspeare's name; and I fear no rigor of examination, notwithstanding I have had no books to assist me but the two volumes lent me by yourself (viz., 1st vol. of Alex. Chalmers's edit. 1826, and the late popular edit. in one vol. by Mr. Campbell). The sonnets I have been obliged to quote by memory, and for many of my dates or other materials to depend solely on my memory.”

Subsequently he adds, “The Shakspeare article

cost me more intense labor than any I ever wrote in my life. The final part has cost me a vast deal of labor in condensing; and I believe, if you examine it you will not complain of want of novelty, which luckily was in this case quite reconcilable with truth, — so deep is the mass of error which has gathered about Shakspeare.”

The paper on Professor Wilson has not before been printed in the American edition, and it is intended in a subsequent volume to reprint an interesting series of reminiscences on the same subject not hitherto published either in the Scotch or in the American edition. The saucy paper on “Wilhelm Meister,” and the final paper on “Anecdote” also, both appear in America for the first time in this edition.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
SHAKSPEARE	9
LIFE OF MILTON	89
MILTON	118
CHARLEMAGNE	135
JOAN OF ARC	178
THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY	216
CHARLES LAMB	232
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY	290
JOHN KEATS	318
WILLIAM GODWIN	336
JOHN FOSTER	348
WILLIAM HAZLITT	356
A PERIPATETIC PHILOSOPHER	373
PROFESSOR WILSON	392
GOETHE	408
GOETHE AS REFLECTED IN HIS NOVEL OF WILHELM MEISTER	443
SCHILLER	484
JOHN PAUL FREDERICK RICHTER	508
ANALECTS FROM RICHTER	523
ANECDOTAGE	548
NOTES	571

BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

SHAKSPEARE.¹

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, the protagonist on the great arena of modern poetry, and the glory of the human intellect, was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, in the year 1564, and upon some day, not precisely ascertained, in the month of April. It is certain that he was baptized on the 25th; and from that fact, combined with some shadow of a tradition, Malone has inferred that he was born on the 23d. There is doubtless, on the one hand, no absolute necessity deducible from law or custom, as either operated in those times, which obliges us to adopt such a conclusion; for children might be baptized, and were baptized, at various distances from their birth: yet, on the other hand, the 23d is as likely to have been the day as any other; and more likely than any earlier day, upon two arguments. First, because there was probably a tradition floating in the seventeenth century, that Shakspeare died upon his birthday: now it is beyond a doubt that he died upon the 23d of April. Secondly, because it is a reasonable presumption, that no parents, living in a simple community, tenderly alive to the pieties of household duty, and in an age still clinging reverentially to the ceremonial ordinances of religion, would much delay the adoption of their child into the great family of Christ. Considering the

extreme frailty of an infant's life during its two earliest years, to delay would often be to disinherit the child of its Christian privileges; privileges not the less eloquent to the feelings from being profoundly mysterious, and, in the English church, forced not only upon the attention, but even upon the eye of the most thoughtless. According to the discipline of the English church, the unbaptized are buried with 'mained rites,' shorn of their obsequies, and sternly denied that 'sweet and solemn farewell,' by which otherwise the church expresses her final charity with all men; and not only so, but they are even *locally* separated and sequestered. Ground the most hallowed, and populous with Christian burials of households,

' That died in peace with one another,
Father, sister, son, and brother,'

opens to receive the vilest malefactor; by which the church symbolically expresses her maternal willingness to gather back into her fold those even of her flock who have strayed from her by the most memorable aberrations; and yet, with all this indulgence, she banishes to unhallowed ground the innocent bodies of the unbaptized. To them and to suicides she turns a face of wrath. With this gloomy fact offered to the very external senses, it is difficult to suppose that any parents would risk their own reproaches, by putting the fulfilment of so grave a duty on the hazard of a convulsion fit. The case of royal children is different; their baptisms, it is true, were often delayed for weeks, but the household chaplains of the palace were always at hand, night and day, to baptize them in the very agonies of death.² We must presume, therefore, that William Shakspeare was born on some day very little

anterior to that of his baptism: and the more so because the season of the year was lovely and genial, the 23d of April in 1564, corresponding in fact with what we now call the 3d of May, so that, whether the child was to be carried abroad, or the clergyman to be summoned, no hindrance would arise from the weather. One only argument has sometimes struck us for supposing that the 22d might be the day, and not the 23d; which is, that Shakspeare's sole grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, was married on the 22d of April, 1626, ten years exactly from the poet's death; and the reason for choosing this day *might* have had a reference to her illustrious grandfather's birthday, which, there is good reason for thinking, would be celebrated as a festival in the family for generations. Still this choice *may* have been an accident, or governed merely by reason of convenience. And, on the whole, it is as well perhaps to acquiesce in the old belief, that Shakspeare was born and died on the 23d of April. We cannot do wrong if we drink to his memory on both 22d and 23d.

On a first review of the circumstances, we have reason to feel no little perplexity in finding the materials for a life of this transcendent writer so meagre and so few; and amongst them the larger part of doubtful authority. All the energy of curiosity directed upon this subject, through a period of one hundred and fifty years, (for so long it is since Betterton the actor began to make researches,) has availed us little or nothing. Neither the local traditions of his provincial birthplace, though sharing with London through half a century the honor of his familiar presence, nor the recollections of that brilliant literary

circle with whom he lived in the metropolis, have yielded much more than such an outline of his history, as is oftentimes to be gathered from the penurious records of a gravestone. That he lived, and that he died, and that he was 'a little lower than the angels;' — these make up pretty nearly the amount of our undisputed report. It may be doubted, indeed, whether at this day we are as accurately acquainted with the life of Shakspeare as with that of Chaucer, though divided from each other by an interval of two centuries, and (what should have been more effectual towards oblivion) by the wars of the two roses. And yet the traditional memory of a rural and a sylvan region, such as Warwickshire at that time was, is usually exact as well as tenacious; and, with respect to Shakspeare in particular, we may presume it to have been full and circumstantial through the generation succeeding to his own, not only from the curiosity, and perhaps something of a scandalous interest, which would pursue the motions of one living so large a part of his life at a distance from his wife, but also from the final reverence and honor which would settle upon the memory of a poet so preëminently successful; of one who, in a space of five and twenty years, after running a bright career in the capital city of his native land, and challenging notice from the throne, had retired with an ample fortune, created by his personal efforts, and by labors purely intellectual.

How are we to account, then, for that deluge, as if from Lethe which has swept away so entirely the traditional memorials of one so illustrious? Such is the fatality of error which overclouds every question connected with Shakspeare, that two of his principa^l

critics, Steevens and Malone, have endeavored to solve the difficulty by cutting it with a falsehood. They deny in effect that he *was* illustrious in the century succeeding to his own, however much he has since become so. We shall first produce their statements in their own words, and we shall then briefly review them.

Steevens delivers *his* opinion in the following terms: 'How little Shakspeare was once read, may be understood from Tate, who in his dedication to the altered play of King Lear, speaks of the original as an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend: and the author of the Tatler, having occasion to quote a few lines out of Macbeth, was content to receive them from Davenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised or arbitrarily omitted.' Another critic, who cites this passage from Steevens, pursues the hypothesis as follows: 'In fifty years after his death, Dryden mentions that he was then become *a little obsolete*. In the beginning of the last century, Lord Shaftesbury complains of his *rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit*. It is certain that, for nearly a hundred years after his death, partly owing to the immediate revolution and rebellion, and partly to the licentious taste encouraged in Charles II.'s time, and perhaps partly to the incorrect state of his works, he was ALMOST ENTIRELY NEGLECTED.' This critic then goes on to quote with approbation the opinion of Malone, — 'that if he had been read, admired, studied, and imitated, in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to

make some inquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life.' After which this enlightened writer re-affirms and clenches the judgment he has quoted, by saying — 'His admirers, however, *if he had admirers in that age*, possessed no portion of such enthusiasm.'

It may, perhaps, be an instructive lesson to young readers, if we now show them, by a short sifting of these confident dogmatists, how easy it is for a careless or a half-read man to circulate the most absolute falsehoods under the semblance of truth; falsehoods which impose upon himself as much as they do upon others. We believe that not one word or illustration is uttered in the sentences cited from these three critics, which is not *virtually* in the very teeth of the truth.

To begin with Mr. Nahum Tate. This poor grub of literature, if he did really speak of Lear as 'an *obscure* piece, recommended to his notice by a friend,' of which we must be allowed to doubt, was then uttering a conscious falsehood. It happens that Lear was one of the few Shakspearian dramas which had kept the stage unaltered. But it is easy to see a mercenary motive in such an artifice as this. Mr. Nahum Tate is not of a class of whom it can be safe to say that they are 'well known:' they and their desperate tricks are essentially obscure, and good reason he has to exult in the felicity of such obscurity; for else this same vilest of travesties, Mr. Nahum's Lear, would consecrate his name to everlasting scorn. For himself, he belonged to the age of Dryden rather than of Pope: he 'flourished,' if we can use such a phrase of one who was always withering, about the era of the Revolution. and his Lear, we believe, was arranged in the year

1682. But the family to which he belongs is abundantly recorded in the *Dunciad*, and his own name will be found amongst its catalogues of heroes.

With respect to *the author of the Tatler*, a very different explanation is requisite. Steevens means the reader to understand Addison; but it does not follow that the particular paper in question was from his pen. Nothing, however, could be more natural than to quote from the common form of the play as then in possession of the stage. It was *there*, beyond a doubt, that a fine gentleman living upon town, and not professing any deep scholastic knowledge of literature, (a light in which we are always to regard the writers of the *Spectator*, *Guardian*, &c.,) would be likely to have learned anything he quoted from *Macbeth*. This we say generally of the writers in those periodical papers; but, with reference to Addison in particular, it is time to correct the popular notion of his literary character, or at least to mark it by severer lines of distinction. It is already pretty well known, that Addison had no very intimate acquaintance with the literature of his own country. It is known, also, that he did not think such an acquaintance any ways essential to the character of an elegant scholar and *littérateur*. Quite enough he found it, and more than enough for the time he had to spare, if he could maintain a tolerable familiarity with the foremost Latin poets, and a very slender one indeed with the Grecian. *How* slender, we can see in his 'Travels.' Of modern authors, none as yet had been published with notes, commentaries, or critical collations of the text; and, accordingly, Addison looked upon all of them, except those few who professed themselves followers in the

retinue and equipage of the ancients, as creatures of a lower race. Boileau, as a mere imitator and propagator of Horace, he read, and probably little else amongst the French classics. Hence it arose that he took upon himself to speak sneeringly of Tasso. To this, which was a bold act for his timid mind, he was emboldened by the countenance of Boileau. Of the elder Italian authors, such as Ariosto, and, *à fortiori*, Dante, he knew absolutely nothing. Passing to our own literature, it is certain that Addison was profoundly ignorant of Chaucer and Spenser. Milton only, — and why? simply because he was a brilliant scholar, and stands like a bridge between the Christian literature and the Pagan, — Addison had read and esteemed. There was also in the very constitution of Milton's mind, in the majestic regularity and planetary solemnity of its *epic* movements, something which he could understand and appreciate. As to the meteoric and incalculable eccentricities of the *dramatic* mind, as it displayed itself in the heroic age of our drama, amongst the Titans of 1590–1630, they confounded and overwhelmed him.

In particular with regard to Shakspeare, we shall now proclaim a discovery which we made some twenty years ago. We, like others, from seeing frequent references to Shakspeare in the Spectator, had acquiesced in the common belief, that although Addison was no doubt profoundly unlearned in Shakspeare's language, and thoroughly unable to do him justice, (and this we might well assume, since his great rival, Pope, who had expressly studied Shakspeare, was, after all, so memorably deficient in the appropriate knowledge,) — yet, that of course he had a vague popular knowl-

edge of the mighty poet's cardinal dramas. Accident only led us into a discovery of our mistake. Twice or thrice we had observed, that if Shakspeare were quoted, that paper turned out not to be Addison's ; and at length, by express examination, we ascertained the curious fact, that Addison has never in one instance quoted or made any reference to Shakspeare. But was this, as Steevens most disingenuously pretends, to be taken as an exponent of the public feeling towards Shakspeare? Was Addison's neglect representative of a general neglect? If so, whence came Rowe's edition, Pope's, Theobald's, Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Bishop Warburton's, all upon the heels of one another? With such facts staring him in the face, how shameless must be that critic who could, in support of such a thesis, refer to '*the author of the Tatler,*' contemporary with all these editors. The truth is, Addison was well aware of Shakspeare's hold on the popular mind ; too well aware of it. The feeble constitution of the poetic faculty, as existing in himself, forbade his sympathizing with Shakspeare ; the proportions were too colossal for his delicate vision ; and yet, as one who sought popularity himself, he durst not shock what perhaps he viewed as a national prejudice. Those who have happened, like ourselves, to see the effect of passionate music and 'deep-inwoven harmonics' upon the feeling of an idiot,³ may conceive what we mean. Such music does not utterly revolt the idiot ; on the contrary, it was a strange but a horrid fascination for him ; it alarms, irritates, disturbs, makes him profoundly unhappy ; and chiefly by unlocking imperfect glimpses of thoughts and slumbering instincts, which it is for his peace to have entirely obscured, because for him

they can be revealed only partially, and with the sad effect of throwing a baleful gleam upon his blighted condition. Do we mean, then, to compare Addison with an idiot? Not generally, by any means. Nobody can more sincerely admire him where he was a man of real genius, viz., in his delineations of character and manners, or in the exquisite delicacies of his humor. But assuredly Addison, as a poet, was amongst the sons of the feeble; and between the authors of *Cato* and of *King Lear* there was a gulf never to be bridged over.⁴

But Dryden, we are told, pronounced Shakspeare already in *his* day '*a little obsolete.*' Here now we have wilful, deliberate falsehood. *Obsolete*, in Dryden's meaning, does not imply that he was so with regard to his popularity, (the question then at issue,) but with regard to his diction and choice of words. To cite Dryden as a witness for any purpose against Shakspeare, — Dryden, who of all men had the most ransacked wit and exhausted language in celebrating the supremacy of Shakspeare's genius, does indeed require as much shamelessness in feeling as mendacity in principle.

But then Lord Shaftesbury, who may be taken as half way between Dryden and Pope, (Dryden died in 1700, Pope was then twelve years old, and Lord S. wrote chiefly, we believe, between 1700 and 1710,) 'complains,' it seems, 'of his rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit.' What if he does? Let the whole truth be told, and then we shall see how much stress is to be laid upon such a judgment. The second Lord Shaftesbury, the author of the *Characteristics*, was the grandson of that famous political agitator

the Chancellor Shaftesbury, who passed his whole life in storms of his own creation. The second Lord Shaftesbury was a man of crazy constitution, querulous from ill health, and had received an eccentric education from his eccentric grandfather. He was practised daily in *talking* Latin, to which afterwards he added a competent study of the Greek; and finally he became unusually learned for his rank, but the most absolute and undistinguished pedant that perhaps literature has to show. He sneers continually at the regular built academic pedant; but he himself, though no academic, was essentially the very impersonation of pedantry. No thought however beautiful, no image however magnificent, could conciliate his praise as long as it was clothed in English; but present him with the most trivial commonplaces in Greek, and he unaffectedly fancied them divine; mistaking the pleasurable sense of his own power in a difficult and rare accomplishment for some peculiar force or beauty in the passage. Such was the outline of his literary taste. And was it upon Shakspeare only, or upon him chiefly, that he lavished his pedantry? Far from it. He attacked Milton with no less fervor; he attacked Dryden with a thousand times more. Jeremy Taylor he quoted only to ridicule; and even Locke, the confidential friend of his grandfather, he never alludes to without a sneer. As to Shakspeare, so far from Lord Shaftesbury's censures arguing his deficient reputation, the very fact of his noticing him at all proves his enormous popularity; for upon system he noticed those only who ruled the public taste. The insipidity of his objections to Shakspeare may be judged from this, that he comments in a spirit of absolute puerility upon the name

Desdemona, as though intentionally formed from the Greek word for *superstition*. In fact, he had evidently read little beyond the list of names in Shakspeare; yet there is proof enough that the irresistible beauty of what little he *had* read was too much for all his pedantry, and startled him exceedingly; for ever afterwards he speaks of Shakspeare as one who, with a little aid from Grecian sources, really had something great and promising about him. As to modern authors, neither this Lord Shaftesbury nor Addison read any thing for the latter years of their lives but Bayle's Dictionary. And most of the little scintillations of erudition, which may be found in the notes to the *Characteristics*, and in the *Essays* of Addison, are derived, almost without exception, and uniformly without acknowledgment, from Bayle.⁵

Finally, with regard to the sweeping assertion, that 'for nearly a hundred years after his death Shakspeare was almost entirely neglected,' we shall meet this scandalous falsehood, by a rapid view of his fortunes during the century in question. The tradition has always been, that Shakspeare was honored by the especial notice of Queen Elizabeth, as well as by that of James I. At one time we were disposed to question the truth of this tradition; but that was for want of having read attentively the lines of Ben Jonson to the memory of Shakspeare, those generous lines which have so absurdly been taxed with faint praise. Jonson could make no mistake on this point; he, as one of Shakspeare's familiar companions, must have witnessed at the very time, and accompanied with friendly sympathy, every motion of royal favor towards Shakspeare. Now he, in words which leave no room for doubt, exclaims,

‘ Sweet swan of Avon, what a sight it were
 To see thee in our waters yet appear ;
 And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
 That so did take *Eliza* and our *James*. ’

These princes, then, *were* taken, were fascinated, with some of Shakspeare’s dramas. In Elizabeth the approbation would probably be sincere. In James we can readily suppose it to have been assumed ; for he was a pedant in a different sense from Lord Shaftesbury ; not from undervaluing modern poetry, but from caring little or nothing for any poetry, although he wrote about its mechanic rules. Still the royal *imprimatur* would be influential and serviceable no less when offered hypocritically than in full sincerity. Next let us consider at the very moment of Shakspeare’s death, who were the leaders of the British youth, the *principes juventutis*, in the two fields, equally important to a great poet’s fame, of rank and of genius. The Prince of Wales and John Milton ; the first being then about sixteen years old, the other about eight. Now these two great powers, as we may call them, these presiding stars over all that was English in thought and action, were both impassioned admirers of Shakspeare. Each of them counts for many thousands. The Prince of Wales⁶ had learned to appreciate Shakspeare, not originally from reading him, but from witnessing the court representations of his plays at Whitehall. Afterwards we know that he made Shakspeare his closet companion, for he was reproached with doing so by Milton. And we know also, from the just criticism pronounced upon the character and diction of Caliban by one of Charles’s confidential counsellors, Lord Falkland, that the king’s

admiration of Shakspeare had impressed a determination upon the court reading. As to Milton, by double prejudices, puritanical and classical, his mind had been preoccupied against the full impressions of Shakspeare. And we know that there is such a thing as keeping the sympathies of love and admiration in a dormant state, or state of abeyance; an effort of self-conquest realized in more cases than one by the ancient fathers, both Greek and Latin, with regard to the profane classics. Intellectually they admired, and would not belie their admiration; but they did not give their hearts cordially, they did not abandon themselves to their natural impulses. They averted their eyes and weaned their attention from the dazzling object. Such, probably, was Milton's state of feeling towards Shakspeare after 1642, when the theatres were suppressed, and the fanatical fervor in its noontide heat. Yet even then he did not belie his reverence intellectually for Shakspeare: and in his younger days we know that he had spoken more enthusiastically of Shakspeare, than he ever did again of any uninspired author. Not only did he address a sonnet to his memory, in which he declares that kings would wish to die, if by dying they could obtain such a monument in the hearts of men; but he also speaks of him in his *Il Penseroso*, as the tutelary genius of the English stage. In this transmission of the torch (*λαμπραδοφορια*) Dryden succeeds to Milton; he was born nearly thirty years later; about thirty years they were contemporaries; and by thirty years, or nearly, Dryden survived his great leader. Dryden, in fact, lived out the seventeenth century. And we have now arrived within nine years of the era, when the critical editions started in hot succession to

one another. The names we have mentioned were the great influential names of the century. But of inferior homage there was no end. How came Betterton the actor, how came Davenant, how came Rowe, or Pope, by their intense (if not always sound) admiration for Shakspeare, unless they had found it fuming upwards like incense to the pagan deities in ancient times, from altars erected at every turning upon all the paths of men?

But it is objected that inferior dramatists were sometimes preferred to Shakspeare; and again that vile travesties of Shakspeare were preferred to the authentic dramas. As to the first argument, let it be remembered, that if the saints in the chapel are always in the same honor, because *there* men are simply discharging a duty, which once due will be due forever; the saints of the theatre, on the other hand, must bend to the local genius, and to the very reasons for having a theatre at all. Men go thither for amusement. This is the paramount purpose, and even acknowledged merit or absolute superiority must give way to it. Does a man at Paris expect to see Molière reproduced in proportion to his admitted precedency in the French drama? On the contrary, that very precedency argues such a familiarization with his works, that those who are in quest of relation will reasonably prefer any recent drama to that which, having lost all its novelty, has lost much of its excitement. We speak of ordinary minds; but in cases of *public* entertainments, deriving part of their power from scenery and stage pomp, novelty is for all minds an essential condition of attraction. Moreover, in some departments of the comic, Beaumont and Fletcher, when writing in com-

bination, really had a freedom and breadth of manner which excels the comedy of Shakspeare. As to the altered Shakspeare as taking precedency of the genuine Shakspeare, no argument can be so frivolous. The public were never allowed a choice; the great majority of an audience even now cannot be expected to carry the real Shakspeare in their mind, so as to pursue a comparison between that and the alteration. Their comparisons must be exclusively amongst what they have opportunities of seeing; that is, between the various pieces presented to them by the managers of theatres. Further than this, it is impossible for them to extend their office of judging and collating; and the degenerate taste which substituted the caprices of Davenant, the rants of Dryden, or the filth of Tate, for the jewelry of Shakspeare, cannot with any justice be charged upon the public, not one in a thousand of whom was furnished with any means of comparing, but exclusively upon those (*viz.*, theatrical managers,) who had the very amplest. Yet even in excuse for *them* much may be said. The very length of some plays compelled them to make alterations. The best of Shakspeare's dramas, King Lear, is the least fitted for representation; and even for the vilest alteration, it ought in candor to be considered that possession is nine points of the law. He who would not have introduced, was often obliged to retain.

Finally, it is urged that the small number of editions through which Shakspeare passed in the seventeenth century, furnishes a separate argument, and a conclusive one against his popularity. We answer, that, considering the bulk of his plays collectively, the editions were *not* few. Compared with any know-

case, the copies sold of Shakspeare were quite as many as could be expected under the circumstances. Ten or fifteen times as much consideration went to the purchase of one great folio like Shakspeare, as would attend the purchase of a little volume like Waller or Donne. Without reviews, or newspapers, or advertisements, to diffuse the knowledge of books, the progress of literature was necessarily slow, and its expansion narrow. But this is a topic which has already been treated unfairly, not with regard to Shakspeare only, but to Milton, as well as many others. The truth is, we have not facts enough to guide us ; for the number of editions often tells nothing accurately as to the number of copies. With respect to Shakspeare it is certain, that, had his masterpieces been gathered into small volumes, Shakspeare would have had a most extensive sale. As it was, there can be no doubt, that from his own generation, throughout the seventeenth century, and until the eighteenth began to accommodate, not any greater popularity in *him*, but a greater taste for reading in the public, his fame never ceased to be viewed as a national trophy of honor ; and the most illustrious men of the seventeenth century were no whit less fervent in their admiration than those of the eighteenth and the nineteenth, either as respected its strength and sincerity, or as respected its open procession.⁷

It is therefore a false notion, that the general sympathy with the merits of Shakspeare ever beat with a languid or intermitting pulse. Undoubtedly, in times when the functions of critical journals and of newspapers were not at hand to diffuse or to strengthen the impressions which emanated from the capital, all opin-

ions must have travelled slowly into the provinces. But even then, whilst the perfect organs of communication were wanting, indirect substitutes were supplied by the necessities of the times, or by the instincts of political zeal. Two channels especially lay open between the great central organ of the national mind, and the remotest provinces. Parliaments were occasionally summoned, (for the judges' circuits were too brief to produce much effect,) and during their longest suspensions, the nobility, with large retinues, continually resorted to the court. But an intercourse more constant and more comprehensive was maintained through the agency of the two universities. Already, in the time of James I., the growing importance of the gentry, and the consequent birth of a new interest in political questions, had begun to express itself at Oxford, and still more so at Cambridge. Academic persons stationed themselves as sentinels at London, for the purpose of watching the court and the course of public affairs. These persons wrote letters, like those of the celebrated Joseph Mede, which we find in Ellis's Historical Collections, reporting to their fellow-collegians all the novelties of public life as they arose, or personally carried down such reports, and thus conducted the general feelings at the centre into lesser centres, from which again they were diffused into the ten thousand parishes of England; for, (with a very few exceptions in favor of poor benefices, Welsh or Cumbrian,) every parish priest must unavoidably have spent his three years at one or other of the English universities. And by this mode of diffusion it is, that we can explain the strength with which Shakspeare's thoughts and diction impressed themselves from a very

early period upon the national literature, and even more generally upon the national thinking and conversation.⁸

The question, therefore, revolves upon us in three-fold difficulty — How, having stepped thus prematurely into this inheritance of fame, leaping, as it were, thus abruptly into the favor alike of princes and the enemies of princes, had it become possible that in his native place, (honored still more in the final testimonies of his preference when founding a family mansion,) such a man's history, and the personal recollections which cling so affectionately to the great intellectual potentates who have recommended themselves by gracious manners, could so soon and so utterly have been obliterated?

Malone, with childish irreflection, ascribes the loss of such memorials to the want of enthusiasm in his admirers. Local researches into private history had not then commenced. Such a taste, often petty enough in its management, was the growth of after ages. Else how came Spenser's life and fortunes to be so utterly overwhelmed in oblivion? No poet of a high order could be more popular.

The answer we believe to be this: Twenty-six years after Shakspeare's death commenced the great parliamentary war. This it was, and the local feuds arising to divide family from family, brother from brother, upon which we must charge the extinction of traditions and memorials, doubtless abundant up to that era. The parliamentary contest, it will be said, did not last above three years; the king's standard having been first raised at Nottingham in August, 1642, and the battle of Naseby (which terminated the open warfare)

having been fought in June, 1645. Or even if we extend its duration to the surrender of the last garrison, that war terminated in the spring of 1646. And the brief explosions of insurrection or of Scottish invasion, which occurred on subsequent occasions, were all locally confined, and none came near to Warwickshire, except the battle of Worcester, more than five years after. This is true; but a short war will do much to efface recent and merely personal memorials. And the following circumstances of the war were even more important than the general fact.

First of all, the very mansion founded by Shakspeare became the military head-quarters for the queen, in 1644, when marching from the eastern coast of England to join the king in Oxford; and one such special visitation would be likely to do more serious mischief in the way of extinction, than many years of general warfare. Secondly, as a fact, perhaps, equally important, Birmingham, the chief town of Warwickshire, and the adjacent district, the seat of our hardware manufactures, was the very focus of disaffection towards the royal cause. Not only, therefore, would this whole region suffer more from internal and spontaneous agitation, but it would be the more frequently traversed vindictively from without, and harassed by flying parties from Oxford, or others of the king's garrisons. Thirdly, even apart from the political aspects of Warwickshire, this county happens to be the central one of England, as regards the roads between the north and south; and Birmingham has long been the great central axis,⁹ in which all the radii from the four angles of England proper meet and intersect. Mere accident therefore, of local position, much more

when united with that avowed inveteracy of malignant feeling, which was bitter enough to rouse a re-action of bitterness in the mind of Lord Clarendon, would go far to account for the wreck of many memorials relating to Shakspeare, as well as for the subversion of that quiet and security for humble life, in which the traditional memory finds its best *nidus*. Thus we obtain one solution, and perhaps the main one, of the otherwise mysterious oblivion which had swept away all traces of the mighty poet, by the time when those quiet days revolved upon England, in which again the solitary agent of learned research might roam in security from house to house, gleaning those personal remembrances which, even in the fury of civil strife, might long have lingered by the chimney corner. But the fierce furnace of war had probably, by its *local* ravages, scorched this field of natural tradition, and thinned the gleaner's inheritance by three parts out of four. This, we repeat, may be one part of the solution to this difficult problem.

And if another is still demanded, possibly it may be found in the fact, hostile to the perfect consecration of Shakspeare's memory, that, after all, he was a player. Many a coarse-minded country gentleman, or village pastor, who would have held his town glorified by the distinction of having sent forth a great judge or an eminent bishop, might disdain to cherish the personal recollections which surrounded one whom custom regarded as little above a mountebank, and the illiberal saw as a vagabond. The same degrading appreciation attached both to the actor in plays and to their author. The contemptuous appellation of 'play-book,' served us readily to degrade the mighty volume which cou-

tained Lear and Hamlet, as that of 'play-actor,' or 'player-man,' has always served with the illiberal or the fanatical to dishonor the persons of Roscius or of Garrick, of Talma or of Siddons. Nobody, indeed, was better aware of this than the noble-minded Shakspeare; and feelingly he has breathed forth in his sonnets this conscious oppression under which he lay of public opinion, unfavorable by a double title to his own pretensions; for, being both dramatic author and dramatic performer, he found himself heir to a two-fold opprobrium, and at an era of English society when the weight of that opprobrium was heaviest. In reality, there was at this period a collision of forces acting in opposite directions upon the estimation of the stage and scenical art, and therefore of all the ministers in its equipage. Puritanism frowned upon these pursuits, as ruinous to public morals; on the other hand, loyalty could not but tolerate what was patronized by the sovereign; and it happened that Elizabeth, James, and Charles I., were all alike lovers and promoters of theatrical amusements, which were indeed more indispensable to the relief of court ceremony, and the monotony of aulic pomp, than in any other region of life. This royal support, and the consciousness that any brilliant success in these arts implied an unusual share of natural endowments, did something in mitigation of a scorn which must else have been intolerable to all generous natures.

But whatever prejudice might thus operate against the perfect sanctity of Shakspeare's posthumous reputation, it is certain that the splendor of his worldly success must have done much to obliterate that effect; his admirable colloquial talents a good deal, and his

gracious affability still more. The wonder, therefore, will still remain, that Betterton, in less than a century from his death, should have been able to glean so little. And for the solution of this wonder, we must throw ourselves chiefly upon the explanations we have made as to the parliamentary war, and the local ravages of its progress in the very district, of the very town, and the very house.

If further arguments are still wanted to explain this mysterious abolition, we may refer the reader to the following succession of disastrous events, by which it should seem that a perfect malice of misfortune pursued the vestiges of the mighty poet's steps. In 1613, the Globe theatre, with which he had been so long connected, was burned to the ground. Soon afterwards a great fire occurred in Stratford; and next, (without counting upon the fire of London; just fifty years after his death, which, however, would consume many an important record from periods far more remote,) the house of Ben Jonson, in which probably, as Mr. Campbell suggests, might be parts of his correspondence, was also burned. Finally, there was an old tradition that Lady Barnard, the sole grand-daughter of Shakspeare, had carried off many of his papers from Stratford, and these papers have never since been traced.

In many of the elder lives it has been asserted, that John Shakspeare, the father of the poet, was a butcher, and in others that he was a woolstapler. It is now settled beyond dispute that he was a glover. This was his professed occupation in Stratford, though it is certain that, with this leading trade, from which he took his denomination, he combined some collateral pur-

suits ; and it is possible enough that, as openings offered, he may have meddled with many. In that age, in a provincial town, nothing like the exquisite subdivision of labor was attempted which we now see realized in the great cities of Christendom. And one trade is often found to play into another with so much reciprocal advantage, that even in our own days we do not much wonder at an enterprising man, in country places, who combines several in his own person. Accordingly, John Shakspeare is known to have united with his town calling the rural and miscellaneous occupations of a farmer.

Meantime his avowed business stood upon a very different footing from the same trade as it is exercised in modern times. Gloves were in that age an article of dress more costly by much, and more elaborately decorated, than in our own. They were a customary present from some cities to the judges of assize, and to other official persons ; a custom of ancient standing, and in some places, we believe, still subsisting ; and in such cases it is reasonable to suppose that the gloves must originally have been more valuable than the trivial modern article of the same name. So also, perhaps, in their origin, of the gloves given at funerals. In reality, whenever the simplicity of an age makes it difficult to renew the parts of a wardrobe, except in capital towns of difficult access, prudence suggests that such wares should be manufactured of more durable materials ; and, being so, they become obviously susceptible of more lavish ornament. But it will not follow, from this essential difference in the gloves of Shakspeare's age, that the glover's occupation was more lucrative. Doubtless he sold more costly gloves,

and upon each pair had a larger profit, but for that very reason he sold fewer. Two or three gentlemen 'of worship' in the neighborhood might occasionally require a pair of gloves, but it is very doubtful whether any inhabitant of Stratford would ever call for so mere a luxury.

The practical result, at all events, of John Shakspeare's various pursuits, does not appear permanently to have met the demands of his establishment, and in his maturer years there are indications still surviving that he was under a cloud of embarrassment. He certainly lost at one time his social position in the town of Stratford; but there is a strong presumption, in *our* construction of the case, that he finally retrieved it; and for this retrieval of a station, which he had forfeited by personal misfortunes or neglect, he was altogether indebted to the filial piety of his immortal son.

Meantime the earlier years of the elder Shakspeare wore the aspect of rising prosperity, however unsound might be the basis on which it rested. There can be little doubt that William Shakspeare, from his birth up to his tenth or perhaps his eleventh year, lived in careless plenty, and saw nothing in his father's house but that style of liberal housekeeping, which has ever distinguished the upper yeomanry and the rural gentry of England. Probable enough it is, that the resources for meeting this liberality were not strictly commensurate with the family income, but were sometimes allowed to entrench, by means of loans or mortgages, upon capital funds. The stress upon the family finances was perhaps at times severe; and that it was borne at all, must be imputed to the large and even splendid

portion which John Shakspeare received with his wife.

This lady, for such she really was in an eminent sense, by birth as well as by connections, bore the beautiful name of Mary Arden, a name derived from the ancient forest district¹⁰ of the country; and doubtless she merits a more elaborate notice than our slender materials will furnish. To have been *the mother of Shakspeare*. — how august a title to the reverence of infinite generations and of centuries beyond the vision of prophecy. A plausible hypothesis has been started in modern times, that the facial structure, and that the intellectual conformation, may be deduced more frequently from the corresponding characteristics in the mother than in the father. It is certain that no very great man has ever existed, but that his greatness has been rehearsed and predicted in one or other of his parents. And it cannot be denied that in the most eminent men, where we have had the means of pursuing the investigation, the mother has more frequently been repeated and reproduced than the father. We have known cases where the mother has furnished all the intellect, and the father all the moral sensibility, upon which assumption, the wonder ceases that Cicero, Lord Chesterfield, and other brilliant men, who took the utmost pains with their sons, should have failed so conspicuously; for possibly the mothers had been women of excessive and even exemplary stupidity. In the case of Shakspeare, each parent, if we had any means of recovering their characteristics, could not fail to furnish a study of the most profound interest; and with regard to his mother in particular, if the modern hypothesis be true, and if we are indeed to deduce

from *her* the stupendous intellect of her son, in that case she must have been a benefactress to her husband's family, beyond the promises of fairy land or the dreams of romance; for it is certain that to her chiefly this family was also indebted for their worldly comfort.

Mary Arden was the youngest daughter and the heiress of Robert Arden, of Wilmecote, Esq., in the county of Warwick. The family of Arden was even then of great antiquity. About one century and a quarter before the birth of William Shakspeare, a person bearing the same name as his maternal grandfather had been returned by the commissioners in their list of the Warwickshire gentry; he was there styled Robert Arden, Esq., of Bromich. This was in 1433, or the 12th year of Henry VI. In Henry VII.'s reign, the Arden's received a grant of lands from the crown; and in 1568, four years after the birth of William Shakspeare, Edward Arden, of the same family, was sheriff of the county. Mary Arden was, therefore, a young lady of excellent descent and connections, and an heiress of considerable wealth. She brought to her husband, as her marriage portion, the landed estate of Asbies, which, upon any just valuation, must be considered as a handsome dowry for a woman of her station. As this point has been contested, and as it goes a great way towards determining the exact social position of the poet's parents, let us be excused for sifting it a little more narrowly than might else seem warranted by the proportions of our present life. Every question which it can be reasonable to raise at all, it must be reasonable to treat with at least so much of minute research, as may justify the conclusions which it is made to support.

The estate of Asbies contained fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of commonage. What may we assume to have been the value of its fee-simple? Malone, who allows the total fortune of Mary Arden to have been £110 13s. 4d., is sure that the value of Asbies could not have been more than one hundred pounds. But why? Because, says he, the 'average' rent of land at that time was no more than three shillings per acre. This we deny; but upon that assumption, the total yearly rent of fifty-six acres would be exactly eight guineas.¹¹ And therefore, in assigning the value of Asbies at one hundred pounds, it appears that Malone must have estimated the land at no more than twelve years' purchase, which would carry the value to £100 16s. 'Even at this estimate,' as the latest annotator¹² on this subject *justly* observes, 'Mary Arden's portion was a larger one than was usually given to a landed gentleman's daughter.' But this writer objects to Malone's principle of valuation. 'We find,' says he, 'that John Shakspeare also farmed the meadow of Tugton, containing sixteen acres, at the rate of eleven shillings per acre. Now what proof has Mr. Malone adduced, that the acres of Asbies were not as valuable as those of Tugton? And if they were so, the former estate must have been worth between three and four hundred pounds.' In the main drift of his objections we concur with Mr. Campbell. But as they are liable to some criticism, let us clear the ground of all plausible cavils, and then see what will be the result. Malone, had he been alive, would probably have answered that Tugton was a farm especially privileged by nature; and that if any man contended for so unusual a rent as eleven

shillings an acre for land not known to him, the *onus probandi* would lie upon *him*. Be it so: eleven shillings is certainly above the ordinary level of rent, but three shillings is below it. We contend, that for tolerably good land, situated advantageously, that is, with a ready access to good markets and good fairs, such as those of Coventry, Birmingham, Gloucester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, &c., one noble might be assumed as the annual rent; and that in such situations twenty years' purchase was not a valuation, even in Elizabeth's reign, very unusual. Let us, however, assume the rent at only five shillings, and land at sixteen years' purchase. Upon this basis, the rent would be £14, and the value of the fee-simple £224. Now, if it were required to equate that sum with its present value, a very operose¹³ calculation might be requisite. But contenting ourselves with the gross method of making such equations between 1560 and the current century, that is, multiplying by five, we shall find the capital value of the estate to be eleven hundred and twenty pounds, whilst the annual rent would be exactly seventy. But if the estate had been sold, and the purchase-money lent upon mortgage, (the only safe mode of investing money at that time,) the annual interest would have reached £28, equal to £140 of modern money; for mortgages in Elizabeth's age readily produced ten per cent.

A woman who should bring at this day an annual income of £140 to a provincial tradesman, living in a sort of *rus in urbe*, according to the simple fashions of rustic life, would assuredly be considered as an excellent match. And there can be little doubt that Mary Arden's dowry it was which, for some ten or a dozen

years succeeding to his marriage, raised her husband to so much social consideration in Stratford. In 1550 John Shakspeare is supposed to have first settled in Stratford, having migrated from some other part of Warwickshire. In 1557 he married Mary Arden; in 1565, the year subsequent to the birth of his son William, his third child, he was elected one of the aldermen; and in the year 1568 he became first magistrate of the town, by the title of high bailiff. This year we may assume to have been that in which the prosperity of this family reached its zenith; for in this year it was, over and above the presumptions furnished by his civic honors, that he obtained a grant of arms from Clarendieux of the Heralds' College. On this occasion he declared himself worth five hundred pounds derived from his ancestors. And we really cannot understand the right by which critics, living nearly three centuries from his time, undertake to know his affairs better than himself, and to tax him with either inaccuracy or falsehood. No man would be at leisure to court heraldic honors, when he knew himself to be embarrassed, or apprehended that he soon might be so. A man whose anxieties had been fixed at all upon his daily livelihood would, by this chase after the aerial honors of heraldry, have made himself a butt for ridicule, such as no fortitude could enable him to sustain.

In 1568, therefore, when his son William would be moving through his fifth year, John Shakspeare, (now honored by the designation of *Master*,) would be found at times in the society of the neighboring gentry. Ten years in advance of this period he was already in difficulties. But there is no proof that these difficulties

nad then reached a point of degradation, or of memorable distress. The sole positive indications of his decaying condition are, that in 1578 he received an exemption from the small weekly assessment levied upon the aldermen of Stratford for the relief of the poor; and that in the following year, 1579, he is found enrolled amongst the defaulters in the payment of *TAXES*. The latter fact undoubtedly goes to prove that, like every man who is falling back in the world, he was occasionally in arrears. Paying taxes is not like the honors awarded or the possessions regulated by the *Clarencieux*; no man is ambitious of precedency there; and if a laggard pace in that duty is to be received as evidence of pauperism, nine tenths of the English people might occasionally be classed as paupers. With respect to his liberation from the weekly assessment, that may bear a construction different from the one which it has received. This payment, which could never have been regarded as a burden, not amounting to five pounds annually of our present money, may have been held up as an exponent of wealth and consideration; and John Shakspeare may have been required to resign it as an honorable distinction, not suitable to the circumstances of an embarrassed man. Finally, the fact of his being indebted to Robert Sadler, a baker, in the sum of five pounds, and his being under the necessity of bringing a friend as security for the payment, proves nothing at all. There is not a town in Europe, in which opulent men cannot be found that are backward in the payment of their debts. And the probability is, that Master Sadler acted like most people who, when they suppose a man to be going down in the world, feel their

respect for him sensibly decaying, and think it wise to trample him under foot, provided only in that act of trampling they can squeeze out of him their own individual debt. Like that terrific chorus in Spohr's oratorio of St. Paul, '*Stone him to death.*' is the cry of the selfish and the illiberal amongst creditors, alike towards the just and the unjust amongst debtors.

It was the wise and beautiful prayer of Agar, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches;' and, doubtless, for quiet, for peace, and the *latentis semita vitæ*, that is the happiest dispensation. But, perhaps, with a view to a school of discipline and of moral fortitude, it might be a more salutary prayer, 'Give me riches *and* poverty, and afterwards neither.' For the transitorial state between riches and poverty will teach a lesson both as to the baseness and the goodness of human nature, and will impress that lesson with a searching force, such as no borrowed experience ever can approach. Most probable it is that Shakspeare drew some of his powerful scenes in the *Timon of Athens*, those which exhibit the vileness of ingratitude and the impassioned frenzy of misanthropy, from his personal recollections connected with the case of his own father. Possibly, though a cloud of two hundred and seventy years now veils it, this very Master Sadler, who was so urgent for his five pounds, and who so little apprehended that he should be called over the coals for it in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, may have sate for the portrait of that Lucullus who says of Timon:

'Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman
'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and
often I have dined with him, and told him on't; and come again
to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less; and yet he

would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming
Every man has his fault, and honesty is his; I have told him
on't; but could never get him from it.'

For certain years, perhaps, John Shakspeare moved
on in darkness and sorrow :

' His familiars from his buried fortunes
Slunk all away; left their false vows with him,
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all shunn'd poverty,
Walk'd, like contempt, alone.'

We, however, at this day, are chiefly interested in
the case as it bears upon the education and youthful
happiness of the poet. Now if we suppose that from
1568, the high noon of the family prosperity, to 1578,
the first year of their mature embarrassments, one half
the interval was passed in stationary sunshine, and the
latter half in the gradual twilight of declension, it will
follow that the young William had completed his tenth
year before he heard the first signals of distress; and
for so long a period his education would probably be
conducted on as liberal a scale as the resources of
Stratford would allow. Through this earliest section
of his life he would undoubtedly rank as a gentleman's
son, possibly as the leader of his class, in Stratford.
But what rank he held through the next ten years, or,
more generally, what was the standing in society of
Shakspeare until he had created a new station for
himself by his own exertions in the metropolis, is a
question yet unsettled, but which has been debated as
keenly as if it had some great dependencies. Upon
this we shall observe, that could we by possibility be
called to settle beforehand what rank were best for

favoring the development of intellectual powers, the question might wear a face of deep practical importance; but when the question is simply as to a matter of fact, what *was* the rank held by a man whose intellectual development has long ago been completed, this becomes a mere question of curiosity. The tree has fallen; it is confessedly the noblest of all the forest; and we must therefore conclude that the soil in which it flourished was either the best possible, or, if not so, that anything bad in its properties had been disarmed and neutralized by the vital forces of the plant, or by the benignity of nature. If any future Shakspeare were likely to arise, it might be a problem of great interest to agitate, whether the condition of a poor man or of a gentleman were best fitted to nurse and stimulate his faculties. But for the actual Shakspeare, since what he was he was, and since nothing greater can be imagined, it is now become a matter of little moment whether his course lay for fifteen or twenty years through the humilities of absolute poverty, or through the chequered paths of gentry lying in the shade. Whatever *was*, must, in this case at least, have been the best, since it terminated in producing Shakspeare; and thus far we must all be optimists.

Yet still, it will be urged, the curiosity is not illiberal which would seek to ascertain the precise career through which Shakspeare ran. This we readily concede: and we are anxious ourselves to contribute anything in our power to the settlement of a point so obscure. What we have wished to protest against, is the spirit of partisanship in which this question has too generally been discussed. For, whilst some with a foolish affectation of plebeian sympathies overwhelm us

with the insipid commonplaces about birth and ancient descent, as honors containing nothing meritorious, and rush eagerly into an ostentatious exhibition of all the circumstances which favor the notion of a humble station and humble connections; others, with equal forgetfulness of true dignity, plead with the intemperance and partiality of a legal advocate for the pretensions of Shakspeare to the hereditary rank of gentleman. Both parties violate the majesty of the subject. When we are seeking for the sources of the Euphrates or the St. Lawrence, we look for no proportions to the mighty volume of waters in that particular summit amongst the chain of mountains which embosoms its earliest fountains, nor are we shocked at the obscurity of these fountains. Pursuing the career of Mahommed, or of any man who has memorably impressed his own mind or agency upon the revolutions of mankind, we feel solicitude about the circumstances which might surround his cradle to be altogether unseasonable and impertinent. Whether he were born in a hovel or a palace, whether he passed his infancy in squalid poverty, or hedged around by the glittering spears of bodyguards, as mere questions of fact may be interesting; but, in the light of either accessories or counter-agencies to the native majesty of the subject, are trivial and below all philosophic valuation. So with regard to the creator of Lear and Hamlet, of Othello and Macbeth; to him from whose golden urns the nations beyond the far Atlantic, the multitude of the isles, and the generations unborn in Australian climes, even to the realms of the rising sun (the *ἀνατολὰι ἑλλήσιοι*,) must in every age draw perennial streams of intellectual life, we feel that the little accidents of birth and social condition

are so unspeakably below the grandeur of the theme, are so irrelevant and disproportioned to the real interest at issue, so incommensurable with any of its relations, that a biographer of Shakspeare at once denounces himself as below his subject, if he can entertain such a question as seriously affecting the glory of the poet. In some legends of saints, we find that they were born with a lambent circle or golden aureola about their heads. This angelic coronet shed light alike upon the chambers of a cottage or a palace, upon the gloomy limits of a dungeon, or the vast expansion of a cathedral; but the cottage, the palace, the dungeon, the cathedral, were all equally incapable of adding one ray of color or one pencil of light to the supernatural halo.

Having, therefore, thus pointedly guarded ourselves from misconstruction, and consenting to entertain the question as one in which we, the worshippers of Shakspeare, have an interest of curiosity, but in which he, the object of our worship, has no interest of glory, we proceed to state what appears to us the result of the scanty facts surviving when collated with each other.

By his mother's side, Shakspeare was an authentic gentleman. By his father's he would have stood in a more dubious position: but the effect of municipal honors to raise and illustrate an equivocal rank, has always been acknowledged under the popular tendencies of our English political system. From the sort of lead, therefore, which John Shakspeare took at one time amongst his fellow-townsmen, and from his rank of first magistrate, we may presume that, about the year 1568, he had placed himself at the head of the

Stratford community. Afterwards he continued for some years to descend from this altitude; and the question is, at what point this gradual degradation may be supposed to have settled. Now we shall avow it as our opinion, that the composition of society in Stratford was such that, even had the Shakspeare family maintained their superiority, the main body of their daily associates must still have been found amongst persons below the rank of gentry. The poet must inevitably have mixed chiefly with mechanics and humble tradesmen, for such people composed perhaps the total community. But had there even been a gentry in Stratford, since they would have marked the distinctions of their rank chiefly by greater reserve of manners, it is probable that, after all, Shakspeare, with his enormity of delight in exhibitions of human nature, would have mostly cultivated that class of society in which the feelings are more elementary and simple, in which the thoughts speak a plainer language, and in which the restraints of factitious or conventional decorum are exchanged for the restraints of mere sexual decency. It is a noticeable fact to all who have looked upon human life with an eye of strict attention, that the abstract image of womanhood, in its loveliness, its delicacy, and its modesty, nowhere makes itself more impressive or more advantageously felt than in the humblest cottages, because it is there brought into immediate juxtaposition with the grossness of manners, and the careless license of language incident to the fathers and brothers of the house. And this is more especially true in a nation of unaffected sexual galantry,¹⁴ such as the English and the Gothic races in general: since, under the immunity which their women

enjoy from all servile labors of a coarse or out-of-doors order, by as much lower as they descend in the scale of rank, by so much more do they benefit under the force of contrast with the men of their own level. A young man of that class, however noble in appearance, is somewhat degraded in the eyes of women, by the necessity which his indigence imposes of working under a master; but a beautiful young woman, in the very poorest family, unless she enters upon a life of domestic servitude, (in which case her labors are light, suited to her sex, and withdrawn from the public eye,) so long in fact as she stays under her father's roof, is as perfectly her own mistress and *sui juris* as the daughter of an earl. This personal dignity, brought into stronger relief by the mercenary employments of her male connections, and the feminine gentleness of her voice and manners, exhibited under the same advantages of contrast, oftentimes combine to make a young cottage beauty as fascinating an object as any woman of any station.

Hence we may in part account for the great event of Shakspeare's early manhood, his premature marriage. It has always been known, or at least traditionally received for a fact, that Shakspeare had married whilst yet a boy, and that his wife was unaccountably older than himself. In the very earliest biographical sketch of the poet, compiled by Rowe, from materials collected by Betterton, the actor, it was stated, (and that statement is now ascertained to have been correct,) 'that he had married Anne Hathaway, 'the daughter of a substantial yeoman.' Further than this nothing was known. But in September, 1836, was published a very remarkable document, which gives the assurance of law to the time and fact of this event, yet still

unless collated with another record, does nothing to lessen the mystery which had previously surrounded its circumstances. This document consists of two parts; the first, and principal, according to the logic of the case, though second according to the arrangement, being a *license* for the marriage of William Shakspeare with Anne Hathaway, under the condition 'of *once* asking of the bannes of matrimony,' that is, in effect, dispensing with two out of the three customary askings; the second or subordinate part of the document being a *bond* entered into by two sureties, viz.: Fulke Sandells and John Rychardson, both described as *agricolæ* or yeomen, and both marksmen, (that is, incapable of writing, and therefore subscribing by means of *marks*,) for the payment of forty pounds sterling, in the event of Shakspeare, yet a minor, and incapable of binding himself, failing to fulfil the conditions of the license. In the bond, drawn up in Latin, there is no mention of Shakspeare's name; but in the license, which is altogether English, *his* name, of course, stands foremost; and, as it may gratify the reader to see the very words and orthography of the original, we here extract the *operative* part of this document, prefacing only that the license is attached by way of explanation to the bond. 'The condition of this obligation is suche, that if hereafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment, by reason of any precontract, &c., but that Willm. Shagspere, one thone ptie,' [on the one party,] 'and Anne Hathwey of Stratford, in the diocess of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together; and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe. Aud, moreover, if the said Willm. Shagsperc

do not proceed to solemnization of mariaꝝg with the said Anne Hathwey, without the consent of hir frinds; — then the said obligation ' [viz., to pay forty pounds] ' to be voyd and of none effect, or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue.'

What are we to think of this document? Trepidation and anxiety are written upon its face. The parties are not to be married by a special license; not even by an ordinary license; in that case no proclamation of banns, no public asking at all, would have been requisite. Economical scruples are consulted; and yet the regular movement of the marriage 'through the bell-ropes'¹⁵ is disturbed. Economy, which retards the marriage, is here evidently in collision with some opposite principle which precipitates it. How is all this to be explained? Much light is afforded by the date when illustrated by another document. The bond bears date on the 28th day of November, in the 25th year of our lady the queen, that is, in 1582. Now the baptism of Shakspeare's eldest child, Susanna, is registered on the 26th of May in the year following. Suppose, therefore, that his marriage was solemnized on the 1st day of December; it was barely possible that it could be earlier, considering that the sureties, drinking, perhaps, at Worcester throughout the 28th of November, would require the 29th, in so dreary a season, for their return to Stratford; after which some preparation might be requisite to the bride, since the marriage was *not* celebrated at Stratford. Next suppose the birth of Miss Susanna to have occurred, like her father's, two days before her baptism, viz., on the 24th of May. From December the 1st to May the 24th, both days inclusively, are one hundred and

seventy-five days; which, divided by seven, gives precisely twenty-five weeks, that is to say, six months short by one week. Oh, fie, Miss Susanna, you came rather before you were wanted.

Mr. Campbell's comment upon the affair is, that 'if this was the case,' viz., if the baptism were really solemnized on the 26th of May, 'the poet's first child would *appear* to have been born only six months and eleven days after the bond was entered into.' And he then concludes that, on this assumption, 'Miss Susanna Shakspeare came into the world a little prematurely.' But this is to doubt where there never was any ground for doubting; the baptism was *certainly* on the 26th of May; and, in the next place, the calculation of six months and eleven days is sustained by substituting lunar months for calendar, and then only by supposing the marriage to have been celebrated on the very day of subscribing the bond in Worcester, and the baptism to have been coincident with the birth; of which suppositions the latter is improbable, and the former, considering the situation of Worcester, impossible.

Strange it is, that, whilst all biographers have worked with so much zeal upon the most barren dates or most baseless traditions in the great poet's life, realizing in a manner the chimeras of Laputa, and endeavoring 'to extract sunbeams from cucumbers,' such a story with regard to such an event, no fiction of village scandal, but involved in legal documents, a story so significant and so eloquent to the intelligent, should formerly have been dismissed without notice of any kind, and even now, after the discovery of 1836, with nothing beyond a slight conjectural insinuation.

For our parts, we should have been the last amongst the biographers to unearth any forgotten scandal, or, after so vast a lapse of time, and when the grave had shut out all but charitable thoughts, to point any moral censures at a simple case of natural frailty, youthful precipitancy of passion, of all trespasses the most venial, where the final intentions are honorable. But in this case there seems to have been something more in motion than passion or the ardor of youth. 'I like not,' says Parson Evans, (alluding to Falstaff in masquerade,) 'I like not when a woman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler.' Neither do we like the spectacle of a mature young woman, five years past her majority, wearing the semblance of having been led astray by a boy who had still two years and a half to run of his minority. Shakspeare himself, looking back on this part of his youthful history from his maturest years, breathes forth pathetic counsels against the errors into which his own inexperience had been insnared. The disparity of years between himself and his wife he notices in a beautiful scene of the Twelfth Night. The Duke, Orsino, observing the sensibility which the pretended Cesario had betrayed on hearing some touching old snatches of a love strain, swears that his beardless page must have felt the passion of love, which the other admits. Upon this the dialogue proceeds thus:

Duke. What kind of woman is't?

Viola. Of your complexion.

Duke. She is not worth thee then. What years?

Viola. I' faith.

About your years, my lord.

Duke. Too old, by heaven. *Let still the woman take
An elder than herself: so wears she to him,*

So sways she level in her husband's heart.
 For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
 Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
 More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won,
 Than women's are.

Viola I think it well, my lord.

Duke. Then *let thy love be younger than thyself.*
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent ;
 For women are as roses, whose fair flower,
 Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour.'

These counsels were uttered nearly twenty years after the event in his own life, to which they probably look back ; for this play is supposed to have been written in Shakspeare's thirty-eighth year. And we may read an earnestness in pressing the point as to the *inverted* disparity of years, which indicates pretty clearly an appeal to the lessons of his personal experience. But his other indiscretion, in having yielded so far to passion and opportunity as to crop by prelibation, and before they were hallowed, those flowers of paradise which belonged to his marriage day ; this he adverts to with even more solemnity of sorrow, and with more pointed energy of moral reproof, in the very last drama which is supposed to have proceeded from his pen, and therefore with the force and sanctity of testamentary counsel. The *Tempest* is all but ascertained to have been composed in 1611, that is, about five years before the poet's death ; and indeed could not have been composed much earlier ; for the very incident which suggested the basis of the plot, and of the local scene, viz., the shipwreck of Sir George Somers on the Bermudas, (which were in consequence denominated the Somers' Islands,) did not occur until the year 1609. In the opening of the

fourth act, Prospero formally betroths his daughter to Ferdinand; and in doing so he pays the prince a well-merited compliment of having 'worthily purchas'd' this rich jewel, by the patience with which, for her sake, he had supported harsh usage, and other painful circumstances of his trial. But, he adds solemnly,

'If thou dost break her virgin knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be ministered ;

in that case what would follow ?

'No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall,
To make this contract grow; *but barren hate,
Sour-ey'd disdain and discord, shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both.* Therefore take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.'

The young prince assures him in reply, that no strength of opportunity, concurring with the uttermost temptation, not

'the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
Our worser genius can ——,'

should ever prevail to lay asleep his jealousy of self-control, so as to take any advantage of Miranda's innocence. And he adds an argument for this abstinence, by way of reminding Prospero, that not honor only, but even prudential care of his own happiness, is interested in the observance of his promise. Any unhallowed anticipation would, as he insinuates,

'take away
The edge of that day's celebration,
When I shall think, or Phœbus' steeds are founder'd,
Or night kept chain'd below;'

that is, when even the winged hours would seem to

move too slowly. Even thus Prospero is not quite satisfied. During his subsequent dialogue with Ariel, we are to suppose that Ferdinand, in conversing apart with Miranda, betrays more impassioned ardor than the wise magician altogether approves. The prince's caresses have not been unobserved; and thus Prospero renews his warning:

‘ Look thou be true : do not give dalliance
Too much the rein : the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire i’ the blood : be more abstemious,
Or else — good night your vow.’

The royal lover reassures him of his loyalty to his engagements; and again the wise father, so honorably jealous for his daughter, professes himself satisfied with the prince's pledges.

Now in all these emphatic warnings, uttering the language ‘of that sad wisdom folly leaves behind,’ who can avoid reading, as in subtle hieroglyphics, the secret record of Shakspeare's own nuptial disappointments? We, indeed, that is, universal posterity through every age, have reason to rejoice in these disappointments; for, to them, past all doubt, we are indebted for Shakspeare's subsequent migration to London, and his public occupation, which, giving him a deep pecuniary interest in the productions of his pen, such as no other literary application of his powers could have approached in that day, were eventually the means of drawing forth those divine works which have survived their author for our everlasting benefit.

Our own reading and deciphering of the whole case is as follows. The Shakspeares were a handsome family, both father and sons. This we assume upon the following grounds: First, on the presumption

arising out of John Shakspeare's having won the favor of a young heiress in higher rank than himself; secondly, on the presumption involved in the fact of three amongst his four sons, having gone upon the stage, to which the most obvious (and perhaps in those days a *sine qua non*) recommendation would be a good person and a pleasing countenance; thirdly, on the direct evidence of Aubrey, who assures us that William Shakspeare was a handsome and a well-shaped man; fourthly, on the implicit evidence of the Stratford monument, which exhibits a man of good figure and noble countenance; fifthly, on the confirmation of this evidence by the Chandos portrait, which exhibits noble features, illustrated by the utmost sweetness of expression; sixthly, on the selection of theatrical parts, which it is known that Shakspeare personated, most of them being such as required some dignity of form, viz., kings, the athletic (though aged) follower of an athletic young man, and supernatural beings. On these grounds, direct or circumstantial, we believe ourselves warranted in assuming that William Shakspeare was a handsome and even noble looking boy. Miss Anne Hathaway had herself probably some personal attractions; and, if an indigent girl, who looked for no pecuniary advantages, would probably have been early sought in marriage. But as the daughter of 'a substantial yeoman,' who would expect some fortune in his daughter's suitors, she had, to speak coarsely, a little outlived her market. Time she had none to lose. William Shakspeare pleased her eye; and the gentleness of his nature made him an apt subject for female blandishments, possibly for female arts. Without imputing, however, to this Anne Hathaway any thing

so hateful as a settled plot for insnaring him, it was easy enough for a mature woman, armed with such inevitable advantages of experience and of self-possession, to draw onward a blushing novice ; and, without directly creating opportunities, to place him in the way of turning to account such as naturally offered. Young boys are generally flattered by the condescending notice of grown-up women ; and perhaps Shakspeare's own lines upon a similar situation, to a young boy adorned with the same natural gifts as himself, may give us the key to the result :

‘ Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won ;
 Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd ;
 And, when a woman woes, what woman's son
 Will sourly leave her till he have prevail'd ? ’

Once, indeed, entangled in such a pursuit, any person of manly feeling would be sensible that he had no retreat ; *that* would be — to insult a woman, grievously to wound her sexual pride, and to insure her lasting scorn and hatred. These were consequences which the gentle-minded Shakspeare could not face. He pursued his good fortunes, half perhaps in heedlessness, half in desperation, until he was roused by the clamorous displeasure of her family upon first discovering the situation of their kinswoman. For such a situation there could be but one atonement, and that was hurried forward by both parties : whilst, out of delicacy towards the bride the wedding was not celebrated in Stratford, (where the register contains no notice of such an event) ; nor, as Malone imagined, in Weston-upon-Avon, that being in the diocese of Gloucester ; but in some parish, as yet undiscovered, in the diocese of Worcester.

But now arose a serious question as to the future maintenance of the young people. John Shakspeare was depressed in his circumstances, and he had other children besides William, viz., three sons and a daughter. The elder lives have represented him as burdened with ten ; but this was an error, arising out of the confusion between John Shakspeare the glover, and John Shakspeare a shoemaker. This error has been thus far of use, that, by exposing the fact of two John Shakspeares (not kinsmen) residing in Stratford-upon-Avon, it has satisfactorily proved the name to be amongst those which are locally indigenious to Warwickshire. Meantime it is now ascertained that John Shakspeare the glover had only eight children, viz., four daughters and four sons. The order of their succession was this : Joan, Margaret, WILLIAM, Gilbert, a second Joan, Anne, Richard, and Edmund. Three of the daughters, viz., the two eldest of the family, Joan and Margaret, together with Anne, died in childhood. All the rest attained mature ages, and of these William was the eldest. This might give him some advantage in his father's regard ; but in a question of pecuniary provision, precedency amongst the children of an insolvent is nearly nominal. For the present John Shakspeare could do little for his son ; and, under these circumstances, perhaps the father of Anne Hathaway would come forward to assist the new-married couple. This condition of dependency would furnish matter for painful feelings and irritating words. The youthful husband, whose mind would be expanding as rapidly as the leaves and blossoms of spring-time in polar latitudes, would soon come to appreciate the sort of wiles by which he had been caught. The female

mind is quick, and almost gifted with the power of witchcraft, to decipher what is passing in the thoughts of familiar companions. Silent and forbearing as William Shakspeare might be, Aune, his staid wife, would read his secret reproaches; ill would she dissemble her wrath, and the less so from the consciousness of having deserved them. It is no uncommon case for women to feel anger in connection with one subject, and to express it in connection with another; which other, perhaps, (except as a serviceable mask,) would have been a matter of indifference to their feelings. Anne would, therefore, reply to those inevitable reproaches which her own sense must presume to be lurking in her husband's heart, by others equally stinging, on his inability to support his family, and on his obligations to her father's purse. Shakspeare, we may be sure, would be ruminating every hour on the means of his deliverance from so painful a dependency; and at length, after four years' conjugal discord, he would resolve upon that plan of solitary emigration to the metropolis, which, at the same time that it released him from the humiliation of domestic feuds, succeeded so splendidly for his worldly prosperity, and with a train of consequences so vast for all future ages.

Such, we are persuaded, was the real course of Shakspeare's transition from school-boy pursuits to his public career. And upon the known temperament of Shakspeare, his genial disposition to enjoy life without disturbing his enjoyment by fretting anxieties, we build the conclusion, that had his friends furnished him with ampler funds, and had his marriage been well assorted or happy, we — the world of posterity — should have

ost the whole benefit and delight which we have since reaped from his matchless faculties. The motives which drove him *from* Stratford are clear enough; but what motives determined his course *to* London, and especially to the stage, still remains to be explained. Stratford-upon-Avon, lying in the high road from London through Oxford to Birmingham, (or more generally to the north,) had been continually visited by some of the best comedians during Shakspeare's childhood. One or two of the most respectable metropolitan actors were natives of Stratford. These would be well known to the elder Shakspeare. But, apart from that accident, it is notorious that mere legal necessity and usage would compel all companies of actors, upon coming into any town, to seek, in the first place, from the chief magistrate, a license for opening a theatre, and next, over and above this public sanction, to seek his personal favor and patronage. As an alderman, therefore, but still more whilst clothed with the official powers of chief magistrate, the poet's father would have opportunities of doing essential services to many persons connected with the London stage. The conversation of comedians acquainted with books, fresh from the keen and sparkling circles of the metropolis, and filled with racy anecdotes of the court, as well as of public life generally, could not but have been fascinating, by comparison with the stagnant society of Stratford. Hospitalities on a liberal scale would be offered to these men. Not impossibly this fact might be one principal key to those dilapidations which the family estate had suffered. These actors, on *their* part, would retain a grateful sense of the kindness they had received, and would seek to repay it to John Shak

speare, now that he was depressed in his fortunes, as opportunities might offer. His oldest son, growing up a handsome young man, and beyond all doubt from his earliest days of most splendid colloquial powers, (for assuredly of *him* it may be taken for granted,

‘Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre,)

would be often reproached in a friendly way for burying himself in a country life. These overtures, prompted alike by gratitude to the father, and a real selfish interest in the talents of his son, would at length take a definite shape; and upon some clear understanding as to the terms of such an arrangement, William Shakspeare would at length, (about 1586, according to the received account, that is, in the fifth year of his married life, and the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of his age,) unaccompanied by wife or children, translate himself to London. Later than 1586 it could not well be, for already in 1589 it has been recently ascertained that he held a share in the property of a leading theatre.

We must here stop to notice, and the reader will allow us to notice with summary indignation, the slanderous and idle tale which represents Shakspeare as having fled to London in the character of a criminal, from the persecutions of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot. This tale has long been propagated under two separate impulses. Chiefly, perhaps, under the vulgar love of pointed and glaring contrasts; the splendor of the man was in this instance brought into a sort of epigrammatic antithesis with the humility of his fortunes; secondly, under a baser impulse, the malicious pleasure of seeing a great man degraded. Accord-

ingly, as in the case of Milton,¹⁶ it has been affirmed that Shakspeare had suffered corporal chastisement, in fact, (we abhor to utter such words,) that he had been judicially whipt. Now, first of all, let us mark the inconsistency of this tale. The poet was whipped, that is, he was punished most disproportionately, and yet he fled to avoid punishment. Next, we are informed that his offence was deer-stealing, and from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy. And it has been well ascertained that Sir Thomas had no deer, and had no park. Moreover, deer-stealing was regarded by our ancestors exactly as poaching is regarded by us. Deer ran wild in all the great forests; and no offence was looked upon as so venial, none so compatible with a noble Robin-Hood style of character, as this very trespass upon what were regarded as *feræ naturæ*, and not at all as domestic property. But had it been otherwise, a trespass was not punishable with whipping; nor had Sir Thomas Lucy the power to irritate a whole community, like Stratford-upon-Avon, by branding with permanent disgrace a young man so closely connected with three at least of the best families in the neighborhood. Besides, had Shakspeare suffered any dishonor of that kind, the scandal would infallibly have pursued him at his very heels to London; and in that case Greene, who has left on record, in a posthumous work of 1592, his malicious feelings towards Shakspeare, could not have failed to notice it. For, be it remembered, that a judicial flagellation contains a twofold ignominy. Flagellation is ignominious in its own nature, even though unjustly inflicted, and by a ruffian; secondly, any judicial punishment is ignominious, ever though not wearing a shade of personal degradation

Now a judicial flagellation includes both features of dishonor. And is it to be imagined that an enemy, searching with the diligence of malice for matter against Shakspeare, should have failed, six years after the event, to hear of that very memorable disgrace which had exiled him from Stratford, and was the very occasion of his first resorting to London; or that a leading company of players in the metropolis, *one of whom*, and a chief one, *was his own townsman*, should cheerfully adopt into their society, as an honored partner, a young man yet flagrant from the lash of the executioner or the beadle?

This tale is fabulous, and rotten to its core; yet even this does less dishonor to Shakspeare's memory than the sequel attached to it. A sort of scurrilous rondeau, consisting of nine lines, so loathsome in its brutal stupidity, and so vulgar in its expression, that we shall not pollute our pages by transcribing it, has been imputed to Shakspeare ever since the days of the credulous Rowe. The total point of this idiot's drivel consists in calling Sir Thomas 'an asse;' and well it justifies the poet's own remark, 'Let there be gall enough in thy ink, no matter though thou write with a goose-pen.' Our own belief is, that these lines were a production of Charles II.'s reign, and applied to a Sir Thomas Lucy, not very far removed, if at all, from the age of him who first picked up the precious filth. The phrase 'parliament *member*,' we believe to be quite unknown in the colloquial use of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

'But, that we may rid ourselves once and for ever of this outrageous calumny upon Shakspeare's memory, we shall pursue the story to its final stage. Even

Malone has been thoughtless enough to accredit this closing chapter, which contains, in fact, such a superfluousness of folly as the annals of human dulness do not exceed. Let us recapitulate the points of the story. A baronet, who has no deer and no park, is supposed to persecute a poet for stealing these aerial deer out of this aerial park, both lying in *nephelococcygia*. The poet sleeps upon this wrong for eighteen years; but at length, hearing that his persecutor is dead and buried, he conceives bloody thoughts of revenge. And this revenge he purposes to execute by picking a hole in his dead enemy's coat-of-arms. Is this coat-of-arms, then, Sir Thomas Lucy's? Why, no; Malone admits that it is not. For the poet, suddenly recollecting that this ridicule would settle upon the son of his enemy, selects another coat-of-arms, with which his dead enemy never had any connection, and he spends his thunder and lightning upon this irrelevant object; and, after all, the ridicule itself lies in a Welshman's mispronouncing one single heraldic term — a Welshman who mispronounces all words. The last act of the poet's malice recalls to us a sort of jest-book story of an Irishman, the vulgarity of which the reader will pardon in consideration of its relevancy. The Irishman having lost a pair of silk stockings, mentions to a friend that he has taken steps for recovering them by an advertisement, offering a reward to the finder. His friend objects that the costs of advertising, and the reward, would eat out the full value of the silk stockings. But to this the Irishman replies, with a knowing air, that he is not so green as to have overlooked *that*, and that, to keep down the reward, he had advertised the stockings as worsted. Not at all less flagrant is the

bull ascribed to Shakspeare, when he is made to punish a dead man by personalities meant for his exclusive ear, through his coat-of-arms, but at the same time, with the express purpose of blunting and defeating the edge of his own scurrility, is made to substitute for the real arms some others which had no more relation to the dead enemy than they had to the poet himself. This is the very sublime of folly, beyond which human dotage cannot advance.

It is painful, indeed, and dishonorable to human nature, that whenever men of vulgar habits and of poor education wish to impress us with a feeling of respect for a man's talent, they are sure to cite, by way of evidence, some gross instance of malignity. Power, in their minds, is best illustrated by malice or by the infliction of pain. To this unwelcome fact we have some evidence in the wretched tale which we have just dismissed; and there is another of the same description to be found in all lives of Shakspeare, which we will expose to the contempt of the reader whilst we are in this field of discussion, that we may not afterwards have to resume so disgusting a subject.

This poet, who was a model of gracious benignity in his manners, and of whom, amidst our general ignorance, thus much is perfectly established, that the term *gentle* was almost as generally and by prescriptive right associated with his name as the affix of *venerable* with Bede, or *judicious* with Hooker, is alleged to have insulted a friend by an imaginary epitaph beginning '*Ten in the Hundred,*' and supposing him to be damned, yet without wit enough (which surely the Stratford bellman could have furnished) for devising any, even fanciful, reason for such a supposi-

tion; upon which the comment of some foolish critic is, 'The *sharpness of the satire* is said to have stung the man so much that he never forgave it.' We have heard of the sting in the tail atoning for the brainless head; but in this doggerel the tail is surely as stingless as the head is brainless. For, *1st*, *Ten in the hundred* could be no reproach in Shakspeare's time, any more than to call a man *Three-and-a-half-per-cent.* in this present year, 1838; except, indeed, amongst those foolish persons who built their morality upon the Jewish ceremonial law. Shakspeare himself took ten per cent. *2dly*. It happens that John Combe, so far from being the object of the poet's scurrility, or viewing the poet as an object of implacable resentment, was a Stratford friend; that one of his family was affectionately remembered in Shakspeare's will by the bequest of his sword; and that John Combe himself recorded his perfect charity with Shakspeare by leaving him a legacy of £5 sterling. And in this lies the key to the whole story. For, *3dly*, The four lines were written and printed before Shakspeare was born. The name Combe is a common one; and some stupid fellow, who had seen the name in Shakspeare's will, and happened also to have seen the lines in a collection of epigrams, chose to connect the cases by attributing an identity to the two John Combe's, though at war with chronology.

Finally, there is another specimen of doggerel attributed to Shakspeare, which is not equally unworthy of him, because not equally malignant, but otherwise equally below his intellect, no less than his scholarship; we mean the inscription on his gravestone. This, as a sort of *siste viator* appeal to future sextons

is worthy of the grave-digger or the parish-clerk, who was probably its author. Or it may have been an antique formula, like the vulgar record of ownership in books: —

‘Anthony Timothy Dolthead’s book,
God give him grace therein to look.’

Thus far the matter is of little importance; and it might have been supposed that malignity itself could hardly have imputed such trash to Shakspeare. But when we find, even in this short compass, scarcely wider than the posy of a ring, room found for traducing the poet’s memory, it becomes important to say, that the leading sentiment, the honor expressed at any disturbance offered to his bones, is not one to which Shakspeare could have attached the slightest weight; far less could have outraged the sanctities of place and subject, by affixing to any sentiment whatever (and, according to the fiction of the case, his farewell sentiment) the sanction of a curse.

Filial veneration and piety towards the memory of this great man, have led us into a digression that might have been unseasonable in any cause less weighty than one, having for its object to deliver his honored name from a load of the most brutal malignity. Never more, we hope and venture to believe, will any thoughtless biographer impute to Shakspeare the asinine doggerel with which the uncritical blundering of his earliest biographer has caused his name to be dishonored. We now resume the thread of our biography. The stream of history is centuries in working itself clear of any calumny with which it has once been polluted.

Most readers will be aware of an old story, according to which Shakspeare gained his livelihood for some time after coming to London by holding the horses of those who rode to the play. This legend is as idle as any one of those which we have just exposed. No custom ever existed of riding on horseback to the play. Gentlemen, who rode valuable horses, would assuredly not expose them systematically to the injury of standing exposed to cold for two or even four hours; and persons of inferior rank would not ride on horseback in the town. Besides, had such a custom ever existed, stables (or sheds at least) would soon have arisen to meet the public wants; and in some of the dramatic sketches of the day, which noticed every fashion as it arose, this would not have been overlooked. The story is traced originally to Sir William Davenant. Betterton the actor, who professed to have received it from him, passed it onwards to Rowe, he to Pope, Pope to Bishop Newton, the editor of Milton, and Newton to Dr. Johnson. This pedigree of the fable, however, adds nothing to its credit, and multiplies the chances of some mistake. Another fable, not much less absurd, represents Shakspeare as having from the very first been borne upon the establishment of the theatre, and so far contradicts the other fable, but originally in the very humble character of *call-boy* or deputy prompter, whose business it was to summon each performer according to his order of coming upon the stage. This story, however, quite as much as the other, is irreconcilable with the discovery recently made by Mr. Collier, that in 1589 Shakspeare was a shareholder in the important property of a principal London theatre. It seems destined that all the un-

doubted facts of Shakspeare's life should come to us through the channel of legal documents, which are better evidence even than imperial medals ; whilst, on the other hand, all the fabulous anecdotes not having an attorney's seal to them, seem to have been the fictions of the wonder maker. The plain presumption from the record of Shakspeare's situation in 1589, coupled with the fact that his first arrival in London was possibly not until 1587, but according to the earliest account not before 1586, a space of time which leaves but little room for any remarkable changes of situation, seems to be, that, either in requital of services done to the players by the poet's family, or in consideration of money advanced by his father-in-law, or on account of Shakspeare's personal accomplishments as an actor, and as an adapter of dramatic works to the stage ; for one of these reasons, or for all of them united, William Shakspeare, about the 23d year of his age, was adopted into the partnership of a respectable histrionic company, possessing a first-rate theatre in the metropolis. If 1586 were the year in which he came up to London, it seems probable enough that his immediate motive to that step was the increasing distress of his father ; for in that year John Shakspeare resigned the office of alderman. There is, however, a bare possibility that Shakspeare might have gone to London about the time when he completed his twenty-first year, that is, in the spring of 1585, but not earlier. Nearly two years after the birth of his eldest daughter Susanna, his wife lay in for a second and a *last* time ; but she then brought her husband twins, a son and a daughter. These children were baptized in February of the year 1585 ; so that Shakspeare's

whole family of three children were born and baptized two months before he completed his majority. The twins were baptized by the names of Hamnet and Judith, those being the names of two amongst their sponsors, viz., Mr. Sadler and his wife. Hamnet, which is a remarkable name in itself, becomes still more so from its resemblance to the immortal name of Hamlet¹⁷ the Dane; it was, however, the real baptismal name of Mr. Sadler, a friend of Shakspeare's, about fourteen years older than himself. Shakspeare's son must then have been most interesting to his heart, both as a twin child and as his only boy. He died in 1596, when he was about eleven years old. Both daughters survived their father; both married; both left issue, and thus gave a chance for continuing the succession from the great poet. But all the four grandchildren died without offspring.

Of Shakspeare personally, at least of Shakspeare the man, as distinguished from the author, there remains little more to record. Already in 1592, Greene, in his posthumous *Groat's-worth of Wit*, had expressed the earliest vocation of Shakspeare in the following sentence: 'There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers; in his own conceit the only *Shakscene* in a country!' This alludes to Shakspeare's office of recasting, and even recomposing, dramatic works, so as to fit them for representation; and Master Greene, it is probable, had suffered in his self-estimation, or in his purse, by the alterations in some piece of his own, which the duty of Shakspeare to the general interest of the theatre had obliged him to make. In 1591 it has been supposed that Shakspeare wrote his first drama, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; the

east characteristically marked of all his plays, and, with the exception of *Love's Labor's Lost*, the least interesting.

From this year, 1591, to that of 1611, are just twenty years, within which space lie the whole dramatic creations of Shakspeare, averaging nearly one for every six months. In 1611 was written the *Tempest*, which is supposed to have been the last of all Shakspeare's works. Even on that account, as Mr. Campbell feelingly observes, it has 'a sort of sacredness;' and it is a most remarkable fact, and one calculated to make a man superstitious, that in this play the great enchanter Prospero, in whom, '*as if conscious,*' says Mr. Campbell, '*that this would be his last work,* the poet has been *inspired to typify himself* as a wise, potent, and *benevolent magician,*' of whom, indeed, as of Shakspeare himself, it may be said, that 'within that circle' (the circle of his own art) 'none durst tread but he,' solemnly and forever renounces his mysterious functions, symbolically breaks his enchanter's wand, and declares that he will bury his books, his science, and his secrets,

'Deeper than did ever plummet sound.'

Nay, it is even ominous, that in this play, and from the voice of Prospero, issues that magnificent prophecy of the total destruction which should one day swallow up

'The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea all which it inherit.'

And this prophecy is followed immediately by a most profound ejaculation, gathering into one pathetic abstraction the total philosophy of life:

‘ We are such stuff
As dreams are made of; and our little life
Is rounded by a sleep;’

that is, in effect, our life is a little tract of feverish vigils, surrounded and islauded by a shoreless ocean of sleep — sleep before birth, sleep after death.

These remarkable passages were probably not undesigned; but if we suppose them to have been thrown off without conscious notice of their tendencies, then, according to the superstition of the ancient Grecians, they would have been regarded as prefiguring words, prompted by the secret genius that accompanies every man, such as insure along with them their own accomplishment. With or without intention, however, it is believed that Shakspeare wrote nothing more after this exquisite romantic drama. With respect to the remainder of his personal history, Dr. Drake and others have supposed, that during the twenty years from 1591 to 1611, he visited Stratford often, and latterly once a year.

In 1589 he had possessed some share in a theatre; in 1596 he had a considerable share. Through Lord Southampton, as a surviving friend of Lord Essex, who was viewed as the martyr to his Scottish politics, there can be no doubt that Shakspeare had acquired the favor of James I.; and accordingly, on the 29th of May, 1603, about two months after the king's accession to the throne of England, a patent was granted to the company of players who possessed the Globe theatre; in which patent Shakspeare's name stands second. This patent raised the company to the rank of his majesty's servants, whereas previously they are supposed to have been simply the servants of the Lord

Chamberlain. Perhaps it was in grateful acknowledgment of this royal favor that Shakspeare afterwards, in 1606, paid that sublime compliment to the house of Stuart, which is involved in the vision shown to Macbeth. This vision is managed with exquisite skill. It was impossible to display the whole series of princes from Macbeth to James I. ; but he beholds the posterity of Banquo, one 'gold-bound brow' succeeding to another, until he comes to an eighth apparition of a Scottish king,

' Who bears a glass
Which shows him many more; and some he sees
Who *twofold* balls and *treble* sceptres carry;'

thus bringing down without tedium the long succession to the very person of James I., by the symbolic image of the two crowns united on one head.

About the beginning of the century Shakspeare had become rich enough to purchase the best house in Stratford, called *The Great House*, which name he altered to *New Place*; and in 1602 he bought one hundred and seven acres adjacent to this house for a sum (£320) corresponding to about 1500 guineas of modern money. Malone thinks that he purchased the house as early as 1597; and it is certain that about that time he was able to assist his father in obtaining a renewed grant of arms from the Herald's College, and therefore, of course, to re-establish his father's fortunes. Ten years of a well-directed industry, viz., from 1591 to 1601, and the prosperity of the theatre in which he was a proprietor, had raised him to affluence; and after another ten years, improved with the same success, he was able to retire with an income of £300, or (according to the customary computations) in

modern money of £1500, per annum. Shakspeare was in fact the first man of letters, Pope the second, and Sir Walter Scott the third, who, in Great Britain, has ever realized a large fortune by literature; or in Christendom, if we except Voltaire, and two dubious cases in Italy. The four or five latter years of his life Shakspeare passed in dignified ease, in profound meditation, we may be sure, and in universal respect, at his native town of Stratford; and there he died, on the 23d of April, 1616.¹⁸

His daughter Susanna had been married on the 5th of June of the year 1607, to Dr. John Hall,¹⁹ a physician in Stratford. The doctor died in November, 1635, aged sixty; his wife, at the age of sixty-six, on July 11, 1640. They had one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth, born in 1608, married April 22, 1626, to Thomas Nash, Esq., left a widow in 1647, and subsequently remarried to Sir John Barnard; but this Lady Barnard, the sole grand-daughter of the poet, had no children by either marriage. The other daughter, Judith, on February 10, 1616, (about ten weeks before her father's death,) married Mr. Thomas Quiney of Stratford, by whom she had three sons, Shakspeare, Richard, and Thomas. Judith was about thirty-one years old at the time of her marriage; and living just forty-six years afterwards, she died in February, 1662, at the age of seventy-seven. Her three sons died without issue; and thus, in the direct lineal descent, it is certain that no representative has survived of this transcendent poet, the most august amongst created intellects.

After this review of Shakspeare's life, it becomes our duty to take a summary survey of his works, of

his intellectual powers, and of his station in literature, a station which is now irrevocably settled, not so much (which happens in other cases) by a vast overbalance of favorable suffrages as by acclamation; not so much by the *voices* of those who admire him up to the verge of idolatry, as by the *acts* of those who everywhere seek for his works among the primal necessities of life, demand them, and crave them as they do their daily bread; not so much by eulogy openly proclaiming itself, as by the silent homage recorded in the endless multiplication of what he has bequeathed us; not so much by his own compatriots, who, with regard to almost every other author,²⁰ compose the total amount of his *effective* audience, as by the unanimous 'all hail!' of intellectual Christendom; finally, not by the hasty partisanship of his own generation, nor by the biassed judgment of an age trained in the same modes of feeling and of thinking with himself, — but by the solemn award of generation succeeding to generation, of one age correcting the obliquities or peculiarities of another; by the verdict of two hundred and thirty years, which have now elapsed since the very *latest* of his creations, or of two hundred and forty-seven years if we date from the earliest; a verdict which has been continually revived and re-opened, probed, searched, vexed by criticism in every spirit, from the most genial and intelligent, down to the most malignant and scurrilously hostile which feeble heads and great ignorance could suggest when coöperating with impure hearts and narrow sensibilities; a verdict, in short, sustained and countersigned by a longer series of writers, many of them eminent for wit or learning, than were ever before congregated upon any inquest

relating to any author, be he who he might, ancient²¹ or modern, Pagan or Christian. It was a most witty saying with respect to a piratical and knavish publisher who made a trade of insulting the memories of deceased authors by forged writings, that he was 'among the new terrors of death.' But in the gravest sense it may be affirmed of Shakspeare, that he is among the modern luxuries of life; that life, in fact, is a new thing, and one more to be coveted, since Shakspeare has extended the domains of human consciousness, and pushed its dark frontiers into regions not so much as dimly descried or even suspected before his time, far less illuminated (as now they are) by beauty and tropical luxuriance of life. For instance, — a single instance, indeed one which in itself is a world of new revelation, — the possible beauty of the female character had not been seen as in a dream before Shakspeare called into perfect life the radiant shapes of Desdemona, of Imogene, of Hermione, of Perdita, of Ophelia, of Miranda, and many others. The Una of Spenser, earlier by ten or fifteen years than most of these, was an idealized portrait of female innocence and virgin purity, but too shadowy and unreal for a dramatic reality. And as to the Grecian classics, let not the reader imagine for an instant that any prototype in this field of Shakspearian power can be looked for there. The *Antigone* and the *Electra* of the tragic poets are the two leading female characters that classical antiquity offers to our respect, but assuredly not to our impassioned love, as disciplined and exalted in the school of Shakspeare. They challenge our admiration, severe, and even stern, as impersonations of filial duty leaving to the steps of a desolate and afflicted old

man ; or of sisterly affection, maintaining the rights of a brother under circumstances of peril, of desertion, and consequently of perfect self-reliance. Iphigenia, again, though not dramatically coming before us in her own person, but according to the beautiful report of a spectator, presents us with a fine statuesque model of heroic fortitude, and of one whose young heart, even in the very agonies of her cruel immolation, refused to forget, by a single indecorous gesture, or so much as a moment's neglect of her own princely descent, and that she herself was 'a lady in the land.' These are fine marble groups, but they are not the warm breathing realities of Shakspeare ; there is 'no speculation' in their cold marble eyes ; the breath of life is not in their nostrils ; the fine pulses of womanly sensibilities are not throbbing in their bosoms. And besides this immeasurable difference between the cold moony reflexes of life, as exhibited by the power of Grecian art, and the true sunny life of Shakspeare, it must be observed that the Antigones, &c. of the antique put forward but one single trait of character, like the aloe with its single blossom. This solitary feature is presented to us as an abstraction, and as an insulated quality ; whereas in Shakspeare all is presented in the *concrete* ; that is to say, not brought forward in relief, as by some effort of an anatomical artist ; but embodied and imbedded, so to speak, as by the force of a creative nature, in the complex system of a human life : a life in which all the elements move and play simultaneously, and with something more than mere simultaneity or co-existence, acting and re-acting each upon the other, nay, even acting by each other and through each other. In Shakspeare's characters is felt

for ever a real *organic* life, where each is for the whole and in the whole, and where the whole is for each and in each. They only are real incarnations.

The Greek poets could not exhibit any approximations to *female* character, without violating the truth of Grecian life, and shocking the feelings of the audience. The drama with the Greeks, as with us, though much less than with us, was a picture of human life; and that which could not occur in life could not wisely be exhibited on the stage. Now, in ancient Greece, women were secluded from the society of men. The conventual sequestration of the *gynaecoritis*, or female apartment²² of the house, and the Mahommedan consecration of its threshold against the ingress of males, had been transplanted from Asia into Greece thousands of years perhaps before either convents or Mahommed existed. Thus barred from all open social intercourse, women could not develope or express any character by word or action. Even to *have* a character, violated, to a Grecian mind, the ideal portrait of feminine excellence; whence, perhaps, partly the too generic, too little individualized, style of Grecian beauty. But prominently to *express* a character was impossible under the common tenor of Grecian life, unless when high tragical catastrophes transcended the decorums of that tenor, or for a brief interval raised the curtain which veiled it. Hence the subordinate part which women play upon the Greek stage in all but some half dozen cases. In the paramount tragedy on that stage, the model tragedy, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, there is virtually no woman at all; for Jocasta is a party to the story merely as the dead Laius or the self-murdered Sphinx was a party, viz., by her contribu-

sions to the fatalities of the event, not by anything she does or says spontaneously. In fact, the Greek poet, if a wise poet, could not address himself genially to a task in which he must begin by shocking the sensibilities of his countrymen. And hence followed, not only the dearth of female characters in the Grecian drama, but also a second result still more favorable to the sense of a new power evolved by Shakspeare. Whenever the common law of Grecian life did give way, it was, as we have observed, to the suspending force of some great convulsion or tragical catastrophe. This for a moment (like an earthquake in a nunnery) would set at liberty even the timid, fluttering Grecian women, those doves of the dove-cot, and would call some of them into action. But which? Precisely those of energetic and masculine minds; the timid and feminine would but shrink the more from public gaze and from tumult. Thus it happened, that such female characters as *were* exhibited in Greece, could not but be the harsh and the severe. If a gentle Ismene appeared for a moment in contest with some energetic sister Antigone, (and, chiefly, perhaps, by way of drawing out the fiercer character of that sister,) she was soon dismissed as unfit for scenical effect. So that not only were female characters few, but, moreover, of these few the majority were but repetitions of masculine qualities in female persons. Female agency being seldom summoned on the stage, except when it had received a sort of special dispensation from its sexual character, by some terrific convulsions of the house or the city, naturally it assumed the style of action suited to these circumstances. And hence it arose, that not woman as she differed from man, but woman

as she resembled man — woman, in short, seen under circumstances so dreadful as to abolish the effect of sexual distinction, was the woman of the Greek tragedy.²³ And hence generally arose for Shakspeare the wider field, and the more astonishing by its perfect novelty, when he first introduced female characters, not as mere varieties or echoes of masculine characters, a Medea or Clytemnestra, or a vindictive Hecuba, the mere tigress of the tragic tiger, but female characters that had the appropriate beauty of female nature; woman no longer grand, terrific, and repulsive, but woman ‘after her kind’ — the other hemisphere of the dramatic world; woman, running through the vast gamut of womanly loveliness; woman, as emancipated, exalted, ennobled, under a new law of Christian morality; woman, the sister and coequal of man, no longer his slave, his prisoner, and sometimes his rebel. ‘It is a far cry to Loch Awe;’ and from the Athenian stage to the stage of Shakspeare, it may be said, is a prodigious interval. True; but prodigious as it is, there is really nothing between them. The Roman stage, at least the tragic stage, as is well known, was put out, as by an extinguisher, by the cruel amphitheatre, just as a candle is made pale and ridiculous by daylight. Those who were fresh from the real murders of the bloody amphitheatre regarded with contempt the mimic murders of the stage. Stimulation too coarse and too intense had its usual effect in making the sensibilities callous. Christian emperors arose at length, who abolished the amphitheatre in its bloodier features. But by that time the genius of the tragic muse had long slept the sleep of death. And that muse had no resurrection until the age of Shak

peare. So that, notwithstanding a gulf of nineteen centuries and upwards separates Shakspeare from Euripides, the last of the surviving Greek tragedians, the one is still the nearest successor of the other, just as Connaught and the islands in Clew Bay are next neighbors to America, although three thousand watery columns, each of a cubic mile in dimensions, divide them from each other.

A second reason, which lends an emphasis of novelty and effective power to Shakspeare's female world, is a peculiar fact of contrast which exists between that and his corresponding world of men. Let us explain. The purpose and the intention of the Grecian stage was not primarily to develop human *character*, whether in men or in women: human *fates* were its object; great tragic situations under the mighty control of a vast cloudy destiny, dimly descried at intervals, and brooding over human life by mysterious agencies, and for mysterious ends. Man, no longer the representative of an august *will*, man, the passion-puppet of fate, could not with any effect display what we call a character, which is a distinction between man and man, emanating originally from the will, and expressing its determinations, moving under the large variety of human impulses. The will is the central pivot of character; and this was obliterated, thwarted, cancelled by the dark fatalism which brooded over the Grecian stage. That explanation will sufficiently clear up the reason why marked or complex variety of character was slighted by the great principles of the Greek tragedy. And every scholar who has studied that grand drama of Greece with feeling, — that drama, so magnificent, so regal, so stately, — and who has

thoughtfully investigated its principles, and its difference from the English drama, will acknowledge that powerful and elaborate character, character, for instance, that could employ the fiftieth part of that profound analysis which has been applied to Hamlet, to Falstaff, to Lear, to Othello, and applied by Mrs. Jamieson so admirably to the full development of the Shakspearian heroines, would have been as much wasted, nay, would have been defeated, and interrupted the blind agencies of fate, just in the same way as it would injure the shadowy grandeur of a ghost to individualize it too much. Milton's angels are slightly touched, superficially touched, with differences of character; but they are such differences, so simple and general, as are just sufficient to rescue them from the reproach applied to Virgil's '*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthem*;' just sufficient to make them knowable apart. Pliny speaks of painters who painted in one or two colors; and, as respects the angelic characters, Milton does so; he is *monochromatic*. So, and for reasons resting upon the same ultimate philosophy, were the mighty architects of the Greek tragedy. They also were monochromatic; they also, as to the characters of their persons, painted in one color. And so far there might have been the same novelty in Shakspeare's men as in his women. There *might* have been, but the reason why there is *not* must be sought in the fact, that History, the muse of History, had there even been no such muse as Melpomene, would have forced us into an acquaintance with human character. History, as the representative of actual life, of real man, gives us powerful delineations of character in its chief agents, that is, in men; and therefore it

s that Shakspeare, the absolute creator of female character, was but the mightiest of all painters with regard to male character. Take a single instance. The Antony of Shakspeare, immortal for its execution, is found, after all, as regards the primary conception, in history. Shakspeare's delineation is but the expansion of the germ already preëxisting, by way of scattered fragments, in Cicero's Philippics, in Cicero's Letters, in Appian, &c. But Cleopatra, equally fine, is a pure creation of art. The situation and the scenic circumstances belong to history, but the character belongs to Shakspeare.

In the great world, therefore, of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakspeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, *this* is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, *that* is another. For reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian,²¹ no Roman, could have conceived a ghost. That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs to the Christian mind. And in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, who but Shakspeare has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth 'the majesty of buried Denmark,' how like an awful necromancer does Shakspeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition had gathered about the subject

of apparitions, are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock, (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion;) its starting 'as a guilty thing' placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aerial substance, yet clothed in palpable armor; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language, and the appropriate scenery of its haunt, viz., the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night, — what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapor, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions, than could have happened had it been insulated and left naked of this circumstantial pomp! In the *Tempest*, again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the spiritualities of religion! Ariel in antithesis to Caliban! What is most ethereal to what is most animal! A phantom of air, an abstraction of the dawn and of vesper sun-lights, a bodiless sylph on the one hand; on the other a gross carnal monster, like the Miltonic Asmodai, 'the fleshliest incubus' among the fiends, and yet so far ennobled into interest by his intellectual power, and by the grandeur of misanthropy!²⁵ In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified

by Shakspeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel. They approach, but how far they recede. They are like — 'like, but, oh, how different!' And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns, are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords. The witches in Macbeth are another variety of supernatural life, in which Shakspeare's power to enchain and to disenchant are alike portentous. The circumstances of the blasted heath, the army at a distance, the withered attire of the mysterious hags, and the choral litanies of their fiendish Sabbath, are as finely imagined in their kind as those which herald and which surround the ghost in Hamlet. There we see the *positive* of Shakspeare's superior power. But now turn and look to the *negative*. At a time when the trials of witches, the royal book on demonology, and popular superstition (all so far useful, as they prepared a basis of undoubting faith for the poet's serious use of such agencies) had degraded and polluted the ideas of these mysterious beings by many mean associations, Shakspeare does not fear to employ them in high tragedy, (a tragedy moreover which, though not the very greatest of his efforts as an intellectual whole, nor as a struggle of passion, is *among* the greatest in any view, and positively *the* greatest for scenical grandeur, and in that respect makes the nearest approach of all English tragedies to the Grecian model;) he does not fear to introduce, for the same appalling effect

as that for which Æschylus introduced the Eumenides, a triad of old women, concerning whom an English wit has remarked this grotesque peculiarity in the popular creed of that day, — that although potent over winds and storms, in league with powers of darkness, they yet stood in awe of the constable, — yet relying on his own supreme power to disenchant as well as to enchant, to create and to uncreate, he mixes these women and their dark machineries with the power of armies, with the agencies of kings, and the fortunes of martial kingdoms. Such was the sovereignty of this poet, so mighty its compass!

A third fund of Shakspeare's peculiar power lies in his teeming fertility of fine thoughts and sentiments. From his works alone might be gathered a golden bead-roll of thoughts the deepest, subtilest, most pathetic, and yet most catholic and universally intelligible; the most characteristic, also, and appropriate to the particular person, the situation, and the case, yet, at the same time, applicable to the circumstances of every human being, under all the accidents of life, and all vicissitudes of fortune. But this subject offers so vast a field of observation, it being so eminently the prerogative of Shakspeare to have thought more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined, that we cannot wrong the dignity of such a theme by doing more, in our narrow limits, than simply noticing it as one of the emblazonries upon Shakspeare's shield.

Fourthly, we shall indicate (and, as in the last case, *barely* indicate, without attempting in so vast a field to offer any inadequate illustrations) one mode of Shakspeare's dramatic excellence, which hitherto has not

attracted any special or separate notice. We allude to the forms of life, and natural human passion, as apparent in the structure of his dialogue. Among the many defects and infirmities of the French and of the Italian drama, indeed, we may say of the Greek, the dialogue proceeds always by independent speeches, replying indeed to each other, but never modified in its several openings by the momentary effect of its several terminal forms immediately preceding. Now, in Shakspeare, who first set an example of that most important innovation, in all his impassioned dialogues, each reply or rejoinder seems the mere rebound of the previous speech. Every form of natural interruption, breaking through the restraints of ceremony under the impulses of tempestuous passion; every form of hasty interrogative, ardent reiteration when a question has been evaded; every form of scornful repetition of the hostile words; every impatient continuation of the hostile statement; in short, all modes and formulæ by which anger, hurry, fretfulness, scorn, impatience, or excitement under any movement whatever, can disturb or modify or dislocate the formal bookish style of commencement, — these are as rife in Shakspeare's dialogue as in life itself; and how much vivacity, how profound a verisimilitude, they add to the scenic effect as an imitation of human passion and real life, we need not say. A volume might be written, illustrating the vast varieties of Shakspeare's art and power in this one field of improvement; another volume might be dedicated to the exposure of the lifeless and unnatural result from the opposite practice in the foreign stages of France and Italy. And we may truly say, that were Shakspeare distinguished from them by this

single feature of nature and propriety, he would on that account alone have merited a great immortality.

The dramatic works of Shakspeare generally acknowledged to be genuine consist of thirty-five pieces. The following is the chronological order in which they are supposed to have been written, according to Mr. Malone, as given in his second edition of Shakspeare, and by Mr. George Chalmers in his Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare Papers :

	Chalmers.	Malone.
1. The Comedy of Errors,	1591	1592
2. Love's Labor's Lost,	1592	1594
3. Romeo and Juliet,	1592	1596
4. Henry VI., the First Part,	1593	1589
5. Henry VI., the Second Part,	1595	1591
6. Henry VI., the Third Part,	1595	1591
7. The Two Gentlemen of Verona,	1595	1591
8. Richard III.,	1596	1593
9. Richard II.,	1596	1593
10. The Merry Wives of Windsor,	1596	1601
11. Henry IV., the First Part,	1597	1597
12. Henry IV., the Second Part,	1597	1599
13. Henry V.,	1597	1599
14. Merchant of Venice,	1597	1594
15. Hamlet,	1598	1600
16. King John,	1598	1596
17. A Midsummer-Night's Dream,	1598	1594
18. The Taming of the Shrew,	1599	1596
19. All's Well that Ends Well,	1599	1606
20. Much Ado about Nothing,	1599	1600
21. As You Like It,	1602	1599

	Chalmers.	Malone.
22. Troilus and Cressida,	1610	1602
23. Timon of Athens,	1611	1610
24. The Winter's Tale,	1601	1611
25. Measure for Measure,	1604	1603
26. King Lear,	1605	1605
27. Cymbeline,	1606	1609
28. Macbeth,	1606	1606
29. Julius Cæsar,	1607	1607
30. Antony and Cleopatra,	1608	1608
31. Coriolanus,	1609	1610
32. The Tempest,	1613	1611
33. The Twelfth Night,	1613	1607
34. Henry VIII.,	1613	1603
35. Othello,	1614	1604

Pericles and Titus Andronicus, although inserted in all the late editions of Shakspeare's Plays, are omitted in the above list, both by Malone and Chalmers, as not being Shakspeare's.

The first edition of the Works was published in 1623, in a folio volume entitled Mr. William Shakspeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. The second edition was published in 1632, the third in 1664, and the fourth in 1685, all in folio; but the edition of 1623 is considered the most authentic. Rowe published an edition in seven vols. 8vo, in 1703. Editions were published by Pope, in six vols. 4to, in 1725; by Warburton, in eight vols. 8vo, in 1747; by Dr. Johnson, in eight vols. 8vo, in 1765; by Stevens, in four vols. 8vo, in 1766; by Malone, in ten vols. 8vo, in 1789; by Alexander Chalmers, in nine vols. 8vo, in 1811; by Johnson and Steevens, revised by Isaac Reed, in twenty-one vols. 8vo, in 1813; and the Plays

and Poems, with notes by Malone, were edited by James Boswell, and published in twenty-one vols. 8vo, in 1821. Besides these, numerous editions have been published from time to time.

LIFE OF MILTON.

PREFATORY MEMORANDA.

1. THIS sketch of Milton's life was written²⁶ to meet the hasty demand of a powerful association (then in full activity) for organizing a systematic movement towards the improvement of popular reading. The limitations, as regarded space, which this association found itself obliged to impose, put an end to all hopes that any opening could be found in this case for an improved life as regarded research into the facts, and the true interpretation of facts. These, though often scandalously false, scandalously misconstrued even where true in the *letter* of the narrative, and read by generations of biographers in an odious spirit of malignity to Milton, it was nevertheless a mere necessity, silently and acquiescingly, to adopt in a case where any noticeable change would call for a justification, and any adequate justification would call for much ampler space. Under these circumstances, finding myself cut off from one mode of service²⁷ to the suffering reputation of this greatest among men, it occurred, naturally, that I might imperfectly compensate that defect by service of the same character applied in a different direction. Facts, falsely stated or maliciously colored, require, too frequently, elaborate details for their exposure: but transient opinions, or solemn judgments, or insinuations dexterously applied to openings made by vagueness of statement or laxity of language, it is possible oftentimes to face and dissipate instan-

taneously by a single word of reasonable distinction, or by a simple rectification of the logic. Sometimes a solitary whisper, suggesting a fact that had been overlooked, or a logical relation that had been wilfully darkened, is found sufficient for the triumphant overthrow of a scoff that has corroded Milton's memory for three^d generations. Accident prevented me from doing much even in this line for the exposure of Milton's injuries: hereafter I hope to do more; but in the mean time I call the reader's attention to one such rectification applied by myself to the effectual prostration of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the worst enemy that Milton and his great cause have ever been called on to confront; the worst as regards undying malice,—in which qualification for mischief Dr. Johnson was not at all behind the diabolical Lander or the maniacal Curran; and the foremost by many degrees in talents and opportunities for giving effect to his malice. I will here expand the several steps in the process of the case, so that the least attentive of readers, or least logical, may understand in what mode and in what degree Dr. Johnson, hunting for a triumph, allowed himself to trespass across the frontiers of calumny and falsehood, and at the same time may understand how far my own exposure smashes the Doctor's attempt in the shell.

Dr. Johnson is pursuing the narrative of Milton's travels in Italy; and he has arrived at that point where Milton, then in the south of that peninsula, and designing to go forward into Greece, Egypt, and Syria, is suddenly arrested by great tidings from England: so great, indeed, that in Milton's ear, who well knew to what issue the public disputes were tending, these tidings must have sounded revolutionary. The king was preparing a second military expedition against Scotland; that is against Scotland as the bulwark of an odious anti-episcopal church. It was notorious that the English aristocracy by a very large section, and much of the English nation upon motives variously combined, some on religious grounds, some on political, could not be relied on for any effectual support in a war having such objects, and opening so many occasions for diverting the national arms to popular purposes. It was pretty well known also, that dreadful pecuniary embarrassments would

at last *compel* the king to summon, in right earnest, such a Parliament as would no longer be manageable, but would in the very first week of its meeting find a security against a sudden dissolution. Using its present advantages prudently, any Parliament would *now* bring the king virtually upon his knees: and the issue must be — ample concession on the king's part to claimants now become national, or else *Revolution and Civil War*. At such a time, and with such prospects, what honest patriot could have endured to absent himself, and under no more substantial excuse than a transient gratification to his classical and archaeological tastes? — tastes liberal and honorable beyond a doubt, but not of a rank to interfere with more solemn duties. This change in his prospects, and consequently in his duties, was painful enough, we may be sure, to Milton: but with *his* principles, and his deep self-denying sense of duty, there seems no room for question or hesitation: and already at *this* point, before they go a step further, all readers capable of measuring the disappointment, or of appreciating the temper in which such a self-conquest must have been achieved, will sympathize heroically with Milton's victorious resistance to a temptation so specially framed as a snare for *him*, and at the same time will sympathize fraternally with Milton's bitter suffering of self-sacrifice as to all that formed the sting of that temptation. Such is the spirit in which many a noble heart, that may be far from approving Milton's politics, will read this secret Miltonic struggle more than two hundred years after all is over. Such is *not* the spirit (as we shall now see) in which it has been read by falsehood and malice.

2. But before coming to *that*, there is a sort of parenthesis of introduction. Dr. Johnson summons us all not to suffer any veneration for Milton to intercept our merriment at what, according to *his* version of the story, Milton is now doing. I therefore, on *my* part, call on the reader to observe, that in Dr. Johnson's opinion, if a great man, the glory of his race, should happen through human frailty to suffer a momentary eclipse of his grandeur, the proper and becoming utterance of our impressions as to such a collapse would not be by silence and sadness, but by vulgar yells of merriment. The Doctor is anxious that

we should not in any case moderate our laughter under any remembrance of *who* it is that we are laughing at.

3. Well, having stated this little item in the Johnson creed, I am not meditating any waste of time in discussing it, especially because the case which the Doctor's maxim contemplates is altogether imaginary. The case in which he recommended unrestrained laughter, was a case of "great promises and small performances." Where then does Dr. Sam show us such a case? Is it in any part or section of Milton's Italian experience? Logically it ought to be so; because else what relation can it bear to any subject which the Doctor has brought before us? But in anything that Milton on this occasion, or on any occasion whatever connected with the sacrifice of his Greek, Egyptian, or Syrian projects, either said or did, there is no promise at all, small or great. And as to any relation between the supposed promise and the subsequent performance, as though the one were incommensurable to the other, doubtless many are the incommensurable quantities known to mathematicians; but I conceive that the geometry which measures their relations, where the promise was never made and the performance never contemplated, must be lost and hid away in secret chambers of moonshine beyond the "recuperative" powers (Johnsonically speaking) of Apollonius himself. Milton made no promises at all, consequently could not break any. And to represent him, for a purpose of blame and ridicule, as doing either *this* or *that*, is malice at any rate; too much, I fear, is wilful, conscious, deliberate falsehood.

4. What was it then which Milton did in Italy, as to which I never heard of his glorying, though most fervently he was entitled to glory? Knowing that in a land which is passing through stages of political renovation, of searching purification, and of all which we now understand by the term *revolution*, golden occasions offer themselves unexpectedly for suggesting golden enlargements or revisions of abuses else overlooked, but that, when the wax has hardened, the opening is lost, so that great interests may depend upon the actual presence of some individual reformer, and that his absence may operate injuriously through long generations, he wisely resolved (though say-

ing little about the enormous sacrifice which this entailed) to be present as soon as the great crucible was likely to be in active operation. And the sacrifice which he made, for this great series of watching opportunities which so memorably he afterwards improved, was, that he renounced the heavenly spectacle of the Ægean Sea and its sunny groups of islands, renounced the sight of Attica, of the Theban districts, of the Morea; next, of that ancient river Nile, the river of Pharaoh and Moses, of the Pyramids, and the hundred-gated Thebes; finally, he renounced the land of Syria, much of which was then doubtless unsafe for a Frank of any religion, and for a Christian of any nation. But he might have travelled in one district of Syria, viz. Palestine, which for him had paramount attractions. All these objects of commanding interest to any profound scholar, Greece, the Grecian Isles, Egypt, and Palestine, he surrendered to his sense of duty; not by any promise or engagement, but by the *act* then and there of turning his face homewards; well aware at the time that his chance was small indeed, under his peculiar prospects, of ever recovering his lost chance. He did not promise any sacrifice. Who was then in Italy to whom he could rationally have confided such an engagement? He *made* the sacrifice without a word of promise. So much for Dr. Johnson's "small performance."

5. But supposing that there *had* been any words uttered by Milton, authorizing great expectations of what he would do in the way of patriotic service, where is the proof that the very largest promises conceivable, interpreted (as they ought to have been) by the known circumstances of Milton's social position, were not realized in vast over-measure? I contend that even the various polemic²⁹ works, which Milton published through the next twenty years; for instance, his new views on Education, on Freedom of the Press, to some extent, also, his Apology for Tyrannicide, but above all his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, against the most insolent, and in this particular case, the most *ignorant* champion that literary Christendom could have selected, — that immortal Apology for England,

"Whereof all Europe rang from side to side."

Had this been all, he would have redeemed in the noblest manner any promises that he *could* have made, not to repeat that he made none. But there is a deeper knavery in Dr. Johnson than simply what shows itself thus far. One word remains to be said on another aspect of the case.

6. Thus far we see the Doctor fastening upon Milton a forged engagement, for the one sole purpose of showing that the responsibility thus contracted was ludicrously betrayed. Now let us understand *how*. Supposing Milton to have done what the Doctor vaguely asserts, — i. e. to have promised that, during the coming revolutionary struggle in his country, he would himself do something to make this struggle grand or serviceable, — how was it, where was it, when was it, that he brought his vow to an inglorious solution, to the Horatian solution of *Parturiunt montes*, &c. ? Dr. Johnson would apparently have thought it a most appropriate and heroic solution, if Milton had made himself a major in the Lobsters³⁰ of Sir Arthur Hazelrigg, or among the Ironsides of Cromwell. But, on the contrary, he made himself (*risum teneatis?*) a schoolmaster. Dr. Johnson (himself a schoolmaster at one time), if he had possessed any sense of true dignity, would have recollected and said secretly to himself, *de te fabula narratur*, and would have abhorred to throw out lures to a mocking audience, when he himself lurked under the mask offered to public banter. On this, however, I do not pause; neither do I pause upon a question so entirely childish, as whether Milton ever was, in any legal sense, clothed with the character of schoolmaster? I refuse even, out of reverential sympathy with that majestic mind that would have made Milton refuse, to insist upon the fact that, even under this most puerile assault upon his social rank, Milton did really (by making himself secretary to Cromwell) rise into something very like the official station of Foreign Secretary. All this I blow away to the four winds. I am now investigating the sincerity and honesty of Dr. Johnson under a trying temptation from malice that cannot be expressed nor measured. He had bound himself to bring out Samson blind and amongst enemies to make sport for the Philistines at Gaza. And the sport was to lie in the collision between a mighty promise and a miserable performance

What the Doctor tells us, therefore, in support of this allegation, is, that somewhere or other Milton announced a magnificent display of patriotism at some time and in some place, but that when he reached London all this pomp of preparation evanesced in his opening a private boarding-school.

Upon this I have one question to propound; and I will make it more impressive, and perhaps intelligible, by going back into history, and searching about for a great man, as to whom the same question may be put with more effect. Most of us think that Hannibal was a great man; and amongst distinguished people of letters, my own contemporaries, when any accident has suggested a comparison amongst the intellectual leaders of antiquity, I have noted that a very large majority (two thirds I should say against one) gave a most cordial vote for the supremacy of this one-eyed Carthaginian. Well, this man was once a boy; and, when not more than nine years old, he was solemnly led by his father to the blazing altar of some fierce avenging deity (Moloch perhaps) such as his compatriots worshipped, and by all the sanctities that ever he had heard of, the boy was pledged and sacramentally bound to an undying hatred and persecution of the Romans. And most people are of opinion that he, the man who fought with no backer but a travellingst earthquake at Lake Thrasymene, and subsequently at Cannæ left 50,000 Romans on the ground, and for seventeen years took his pleasure in Italy, pretty well redeemed his vow.

Now let us suppose (and it is no extravagant supposition even for those days) that some secretary, a slave in the house of Amlicar, had kept a Boswellian record of Hannibal's words and acts from childhood upwards. Naturally there would have been a fine *illustration* (such as the age allowed) of the great vow at the altar. All readers in after times, arrested and impressed by the scene, would inquire for its sequel: did *that* correspond? If amongst these readers there were a Samuel Johnson, he would turn over a page or two, so as to advance by a few months, and there he might possibly find a commemoration of some festival or carousing party, in which the too faithful and literal secretary had recorded that the young *malek* Hannibal had insisted angrily on having at dinner beefsteaks and oyster-sauce,—a

dish naturally imported by the Phœnician sailors from the Cassiterides of Cornwall. Then would rise Sam in his glory, and, turning back to the vow, would insist that *this* was its fulfilment. Others would seek it on Mount St. Bernard, on the line of the Apennines, on the deadly field of Cannæ; but Sam would read thus: Suffer not your veneration to intercept your just and reasonable mockery. Our great prince vows eternal hatred to the enemies of his country, and he redeems his vow by eating a beefsteak with a British accompaniment of oyster-sauce.

The same question arises severally in the Milton and the Hannibal case. — What relation, unless for the false fleeting eye of malice, has the act or the occasion indicated to the supposed solemnity of the vow alleged? Show us the logic which approximates the passages in either life.

I fear that at this point any plain man of simple integrity will feel himself disconcerted as in some mystification purposely framed to perplex him. "Let me understand," he will say, "if a man draws a bill payable in twenty years after date, how is he liable to be called upon for payment at a term far within its legal *curriculum*?" Precisely so: the very excess of the knavery avails to conceal it. Hannibal confessedly had pledged himself to a certain result, whereas Milton had *not*; and to that extent Hannibal's case was the weaker. But assume for the moment that both stand on the same footing. Each is supposed to have guaranteed some great event upon the confidence which he has in his own great powers. But, of course, he understands that, until the full development of those powers on which exclusively he relies, he does not come within the peril of his own obligation. And this being a postulate of mere natural justice, I contend that there was no more relation, such as could have duped Dr. Johnson for a moment, between any supposable promise of Milton's in Italy and that particular week in which he undertook the training of his youthful nephews (or, if it soothes the rancor of Dr. Johnson to say so, in which he opened a boarding-school), than between Hannibal at the altar and the same Hannibal dining on a beefsteak. From all the days of Milton's life, carefully to pick out that one on which only Milton did what Sam implicitly thinks a mean, "low-lived"

action, is a knavery that could not have gone undetected had the case been argued at bar by counsel. It was base, it must have been base, to enter on the trade of schoolmaster; for, as Ancient Pistol, that great moralist, teaches us, "base is the man that pays"; and Milton probably had no other durable resource for paying. But still, however vile in Milton, this does not at all mend the logic of the Doctor in singling out that day or week from the thousands through which Milton lived.

Dr. Johnson wished to go further; but he was pulled up by an ugly remembrance. In earlier years the desperation of malice had led him into a perilous participation in Lauder's atrocities; by haste and by leaps as desperate as the offence, on that occasion he escaped; but hardly: and I believe, much as the oblivions of time aid such escapes by obliterating the traces or the meanings of action, and the coherences of oral evidence, that even yet, by following the guidance of Dr. Douglas (the unmasker of the leading criminal), some discoveries might be made as to Johnson's co-operation.

But in writing *The Lives of the Poets*, one of the Doctor's latest works, he had learned caution. Malice, he found, was not always safe; and it might sometimes be costly. Still there was plenty of game to be had without too much risk. And the Doctor, prompted by the fiend, resolved to "take a shy," before parting, at the most consecrated of Milton's creations. It really vexes me to notice this second case at all in a situation where I have left myself so little room for unmasking its hollowness. But a whisper is enough if it reaches a watchful ear. What, then, is the supreme jewel which Milton has bequeathed to us? Nobody can doubt that it is *Paradise Lost*.³

Into this great *chef-d'œuvre* of Milton, it was no doubt Johnson's secret determination to send a telling shot at parting. He would lodge a little *gage d'amitié*, a farewell pledge of hatred, a trifling token (trifling, but such things are not estimated in money) of his eternal malice. Milton's admirers might divide it among themselves; and, if it should happen to fester and rankle in their hearts, so much the better; they were heartily welcome to the poison: not a jot would he deduct for himself if a thousand times greater. O Sam! kill us not with munifi-

cence. But now, as I must close within a minute or so, what is that pretty souvenir of gracious detestation with which our friend took his leave? The *Paradise Lost*, said he, in effect, is a wonderful work; wonderful; grand beyond all estimate; sublime to a fault. But—well, go on; we are all listening. But—I grieve to say it, wearisome. It creates a world of admiration (*one world, take notice*); but—O that I, senior offshoot from the house of Malagrowthers, should live to say it!—ten worlds of *ennui*: one world of astonishment; ten worlds of *tedium vite*. Half and half might be tolerated,—it is often tolerated by the bibulous and others; but one against ten? No, no!

This, then, was the farewell blessing which Dr. Johnson bestowed upon the *Paradise Lost*: what is my reply? The poem, it seems, is wearisome; Edmund Waller called it *dull*. A man, it is alleged by Dr. Johnson, opens the volume; reads a page or two with feelings allied to awe: next he finds himself rather jaded; then sleepy: naturally shuts up the book; and forgets ever to take it down again. Now, when any work of human art is impeached as wearisome, the first reply is—wearisome to *whom*? For it so happens that nothing exists, absolutely nothing, which is not at some time, and to some person, wearisome, or even potentially disgusting. There is no exception for the works of God. “Man delights not me, nor woman either,” is the sigh which breathes from the morbid misanthropy of the gloomy but philosophic Hamlet. Weariness, moreover, and even sleepiness, is the natural reaction of awe or of feelings too highly strung; and this reaction in some degree proves the sincerity of the previous awe. In cases of that class, where the impressions of sympathetic veneration have been really unaffected, but carried too far, the mistake is—to have read too much at a time. But these are exceptional cases: to the great majority of readers the poem is wearisome through mere vulgarity and helpless imbecility of mind; not from overstrained excitement, but from pure defect in the *capacity* for excitement. And a moment’s reflection at this point lays bare to us the malignity of Dr. Johnson. The logic of that malignity is simply this: that he applies to Milton, as if separately and specially

true of *him*, a rule abstracted from human experience spread over the total field of civilization. All nations are here on a level. Not a hundredth part of their populations is capable of any unaffected sympathy with what is truly great in sculpture, in painting, in music, and by a transcendent necessity in the supreme of Fine Arts, — Poetry. To be popular in any but a meagre comparative sense as an artist of whatsoever class, is to be *confessedly* a condescender to human infirmities. And as to the test which Dr. Johnson, by implication, proposes as trying the merits of Milton in his greatest work, viz. the degree in which it was read, the Doctor knew pretty well, and when by accident he did *not*, was inexcusable for neglecting to inquire, that by the same test all the great classical works of past ages, Pagan or Christian, might be branded with the mark of suspicion as works that had failed of their paramount purpose, viz. a deep control over the modes of thinking and feeling in each successive generation. Were it not for the continued succession of academic students having a contingent *mercenary* interest in many of the great authors surviving from the wrecks of time, scarcely one edition of fresh copies would be called for in each period of fifty years. And as to the arts of sculpture and painting, were the great monuments in the former art — those, I mean, inherited from Greece, such as the groups, &c., scattered through Italian mansions, the Venus, the Apollo, the Hercules, the Faun, the Gladiator, and the marbles in the British Museum, purchased by the government from the late Lord Elgin — stripped of their metropolitan advantages, and left to their own unaided attraction in some provincial town, they would not avail to keep the requisite officers of any establishment for housing them in salt and tobacco. We may judge of this by the records left behind by Benjamin Haydon, of the difficulty which *he* found in simply upholding their value as wrecks of the Phidian era. The same law asserts itself everywhere. What is *ideally* grand lies beyond the region of ordinary³³ human sympathies, which must, by a mere instinct of good sense, seek out objects more congenial and upon their own level. One answer to Johnson's killing shot, as he kindly meant it, is, that our brother is not dead but sleeping. Regularly, as the coming

generations unfold their vast processions, regularly as these processions move forward upon the impulse and summons of a nobler music, regularly as the dormant powers and sensibilities of the intellect in the working man are more and more developed, the *Paradise Lost* will be called for more and more : less and less continually will there be any reason to complain that the immortal book, being once restored to its place, is left to slumber for a generation. So far as regards the Time which is coming; but Dr. Johnson's insulting farewell was an arrow feathered to meet the Past and Present. We may be glad at any rate that the supposed neglect is not a wrong which Milton does, but which Milton suffers. Yet that Dr. Johnson should have pretended to think the case in any special way affecting the reputation or latent powers of Milton, — Dr. Johnson, that knew the fates of books, and had seen by moonlight, in the Bodleian, the ghostly array of innumerable books long since departed as regards all human interest or knowledge, — a review like that in Béranger's *Dream of the First Napoleon at St. Helena*, reviewing the buried forms from Austerlitz or Borodino, horses and men, trumpets and eagles, all phantom delusions, vanishing as the eternal dawn returned, — might have seemed incredible except to one who knew the immortality of malice, — that for a moment Dr. Johnson supposed himself seated on the tribunal in the character of judge, and that Milton was in fancy placed before him at the bar, —

“Quem si non aliqua nocuisset, mortuus esset.”

MILTON'S LIFE.

THAT sanctity which settles on the memory of a great man ought, upon a double motive, to be vigilantly sustained by his countrymen; first, out of gratitude to him as one column of the national grandeur; secondly, with a practical purpose of transmitting unimpaired to posterity the benefit of ennobling models. High standards of excellence are among the happiest distinctions by which the modern ages of the world have an advantage over earlier, and we are all interested, by duty as well as policy, in preserving them inviolate. To the benefit of this principle none amongst the great men of England is better entitled than Milton, whether as respects his transcendent merit, or the harshness with which his memory has been treated.

John Milton was born in London on the 9th day of December, 1608. His father, in early life, had suffered for conscience' sake, having been disinherited upon his abjuring the Popish faith. He pursued the laborious profession of a scrivener, and having realized an ample fortune retired into the country to enjoy it. Educated at Oxford, he gave his son the best education that the age afforded. At first, young Milton had the benefit of a private tutor: from him he was removed to St. Paul's School; next he proceeded to Christ's College, Cambridge; and finally, after several years' preparation by extensive reading, he pursued a course of Continental travel. It is to be observed, that his

tutor, Thomas Young, was a Puritan, and there is reason to believe that Puritan politics prevailed among the Fellows of his College. This must not be forgotten in speculating on Milton's public life, and his inexorable hostility to the established government in Church and State; for it will thus appear probable, that he was at no time withdrawn from the influence of Puritan connections.

In 1632, having taken the degree of M. A., Milton finally quitted the University, leaving behind him a very brilliant reputation, and a general good-will in his own College. His father had now retired from London, and lived upon his own estate in Horton, in Buckinghamshire. In this rural solitude, Milton passed the next five years, resorting to London only at rare intervals, for the purchase of books or music. His time was chiefly occupied with the study of Greek and Roman, and no doubt also of Italian literature. But that he was not negligent of composition, and that he applied himself with great zeal to the culture of his native literature, we have a splendid record in his "Comus," which, upon the strongest presumptions, is ascribed to this period of his life. In the same neighborhood, and within the same five years, it is believed that he produced also the "Arcades" and the "Lycidas," together with "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."

In 1637, Milton's mother died, and in the following year he commenced his travels. The state of Europe confined his choice of ground to France and Italy. The former excited in him but little interest. After a short stay at Paris, he pursued the direct route to Nice, where he embarked for Genoa, and thence proceeded to Pisa, Florence, Rome, and Naples. He originally meant to extend his tour to Sicily and Greece; but the news of the first Scotch war, having now reached him, agitated his mind with too much patriotic sympathy to allow of his embarking on a

scheme of such uncertain duration. Yet his homeward movements were not remarkable for expedition. He had already spent two months in Florence and as many in Rome, but he devoted the same space of time to each of them on his return. From Florence he proceeded to Lucca, and thence, by Bologna and Ferrara, to Venice, where he remained one month, and then pursued his homeward route through Verona, Milan, and Geneva.

Sir Henry Wotton had recommended as the rule of his conduct a celebrated Italian proverb, inculcating the policy of reserve and dissimulation. And so far did this old fox carry his refinements of cunning, that even the dissimulation was to be dissembled. *I pensieri stretti*, the thoughts being under the closest restraint, nevertheless *il viso sciolto*, the countenance was to be open as the day. From a practised diplomatist this advice was characteristic; but it did not suit the frankness of Milton's manners, nor the nobleness of his mind. He has himself stated to us his own rule of conduct, which was to move no questions of controversy, yet not to evade them when pressed upon him by others. Upon this principle he acted, not without some offence to his associates, nor wholly without danger to himself. But the offence, doubtless, was blended with respect; the danger was passed; and he returned home with all his purposes fulfilled. He had conversed with Galileo; he had seen whatever was most interesting in the monuments of Roman grandeur or the triumphs of Italian art; and he could report with truth, that in spite of his religion, everywhere undissembled, he had been honored by the attentions of the great and by the compliments of the learned.

After fifteen months of absence, Milton found himself again in London at a crisis of unusual interest. The king was on the eve of his second expedition against the Scotch; and we may suppose Milton to have been watching the

course of events with profound anxiety, not without some anticipation of the patriotic labor which awaited him. Meantime he occupied himself with the education of his sister's two sons; and soon after, by way of obtaining an honorable maintenance, increased the number of his pupils.

Dr. Johnson, himself at one period of his life a school-master, on this occasion indulges in a sneer and a false charge too injurious to be neglected. "Let not our veneration for Milton," says he, "forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance: on the man who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapors away his patriotism in a private boarding-school." It is not true that Milton had made "great promises," or any promises at all. But if he had made the greatest, his exertions for the next sixteen years nobly redeemed them. In what way did Dr. Johnson expect that his patriotism should be expressed? As a soldier? Milton has himself urged his bodily weakness and intellectual strength, as reasons for following a line of duty ten thousand times nobler. Was he influenced in his choice by fear of military dangers or hardships? Far from it: "For I did not," he says, "shun those evils without engaging to render to my fellow-citizens services much more useful, and attended with no less of danger." What services were those? We will state them in his own words, anticipated from an after period. "When I observed that there are in all three modes of liberty,—first, ecclesiastical liberty; secondly, civil liberty; thirdly, domestic: having myself already treated of the first, and noticing that the magistrate was taking steps in behalf of the second, I concluded that the third, that is to say domestic, or household liberty, remained to me as my peculiar province. And whereas this again is capable of a threefold subdivision,

accordingly as it regards the interests of conjugal life in the first place, or those of education in the second, or finally the freedom of speech, and the right of giving full publication to sound opinions,—I took it upon myself to defend all three, the first, by my ‘*Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* ;’ the second, by my *Tractate upon Education* ; the third, by my ‘*Areopagitica*.’”

In 1641, he conducted his defence of ecclesiastical liberty in a series of attacks upon Episcopacy. These are written in a spirit of rancorous hostility, for which we find no sufficient apology in Milton’s too exclusive converse with a faction of bishop-haters, or even in the alleged low condition of the episcopal bench at that particular era.³⁴

At Whitsuntide, in the year 1645, having reached his thirty-fifth year, Milton married Mary Powel,³⁵ a young lady of good extraction, in the county of Oxford. One month after, he allowed his wife to visit her family. This permission, in itself somewhat singular, the lady abused; for when summoned back to her home, she refused to return. Upon this provocation, Milton set himself seriously to consider the extent of the obligations imposed by the nuptial vow; and soon came to the conclusion, that in point of conscience it was not less dissoluble for hopeless incompatibility of temper than for positive adultery; and that human laws, in so far as they opposed this principle, called for reformation. These views he laid before the public in his “*Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.” In treating this question he had relied entirely upon the force of argument, not aware that he had the countenance of any great authorities; but finding soon afterwards that some of the early Reformers, Bucer and P. Martyr, had taken the same view as himself, he drew up an account of their comments on this subject. Hence arose the second of his tracts on Divorce. Meantime, as it was certain that many

would abide by what they supposed to be the positive language of Scripture, in opposition to all authority whatsoever, he thought it advisable to write a third tract on the proper interpretation of the chief passages in Scripture which refer to this point. A fourth tract, by way of answer to the different writers who had opposed his opinions, terminated the series.

Meantime the lady, whose rash conduct had provoked her husband into these speculations, saw reason to repent of her indiscretion; and finding that Milton held her desertion to have cancelled all claims upon his justice, wisely resolved upon making her appeal to his generosity. This appeal was not made in vain: in a single interview at the house of a common friend, where she had contrived to surprise him, and suddenly to throw herself at his feet, he granted her a full forgiveness; and so little did he allow himself to remember her misconduct, or that of her family in having countenanced her desertion, that soon afterwards, when they were involved in the general ruin of the royal cause, he received the whole of them into his house, and exerted his political influence very freely in their behalf. Fully to appreciate this behavior, we must recollect that Milton was not rich, and that no part of his wife's marriage portion (£1,000) was ever paid to him.

His thoughts now settled upon the subject of education, which it must not be forgotten that he connected systematically with domestic liberty. In 1644 he published his essay on this great theme, in the form of a letter to his friend Hartlib, himself a person of no slight consideration. In the same year he wrote his "Arcopagitica; a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing." This we are to consider in the light of an oral pleading or regular oration, for he tells us expressly (*Def.* 2) that he wrote it "ad iustæ orationi; modum." It is the finest specimen extant

of generous scorn. And very remarkable it is that Milton, who broke the ground on this great theme, has exhausted the arguments which bear upon it. He opened the subject; he closed it. And were there no other monument of his patriotism and his genius, for this alone he would deserve to be held in perpetual veneration. In the following year, 1645, was published the first collection of his early poems; with his sanction, undoubtedly, but probably not upon his suggestion. The times were too full of anxiety to allow of much encouragement to polite literature: at no period were there fewer readers of poetry. And for himself in particular, with the exception of a few sonnets, it is probable that he composed as little as others read, for the next ten years; so great were his political exertions.

Early in 1649 the king was put to death. For a full view of the state of parties which led to this memorable event, we must refer the reader to the history of the times. That act was done by the Independent party, to which Milton belonged, and was precipitated by the intrigues of the Presbyterians, who were making common cause with the king, to insure the overthrow of the Independents. The lamentations and outcries of the Presbyterians were long and loud. Under color of a generous sympathy with the unhappy prince, they mourned for their own political extinction and the triumph of their enemies. This Milton well knew; and to expose the selfishness of their clamors, as well as to disarm their appeals to the popular feeling, he now published his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates." In the first part of this he addresses himself to the general question of tyrannicide, justifying it, first, by arguments of general reason, and, secondly, by the authority of the Reformers. But in the latter part he argues the case personally, contending that the Pres-

byterians at least were not entitled to condemn the king's death, who, in levying war and doing battle against the king's person, had done so much that tended to no other result. "If then," is his argument, "in these proceedings against their king, they may not finish, by the usual course of justice, what they have begun, they could not lawfully begin at all." The argument seems inconclusive, even as addressed *ad hominem*; the struggle bore the character of a war between independent parties, rather than a judicial inquiry, and in war the life of a prisoner becomes sacred.

At this time the Council of State had resolved no longer to employ the language of a rival people in their international concerns, but to use the Latin tongue as a neutral and indifferent instrument. The office of Latin Secretary, therefore, was created, and bestowed upon Milton. His hours from henceforth must have been pretty well occupied by official labors. Yet at this time he undertook a service to the state, more invidious and perhaps more perilous than any in which his politics ever involved him. On the very day of the king's execution, and even below the scaffold, had been sold the earliest copies of a work admirably fitted to shake the new government, and which, for the sensation produced at the time, and the lasting controversy as to its authorship, is one of the most remarkable known in literary history. This was the "Eikon Basilike, or Royal Image," professing to be a series of meditations drawn up by the late king, on the leading events from the very beginning of the national troubles. Appearing at this critical moment, and co-operating with the strong reaction of the public mind, already effected in the king's favor by his violent death, this book produced an impression absolutely unparalleled in that century. Fifty thousand copies, it is

asserted, were sold within one year; and a posthumous power was thus given to the king's name by one little book, which exceeded, in alarm to his enemies, all that his armies could accomplish in his lifetime. No remedy could meet the evil in degree. As the only one that seemed fitted to it in kind, Milton drew up a running commentary upon each separate head of the original; and as that had been entitled the king's image, he gave to his own the title of "Eikonoclastes, or Image-Breaker," the famous surname of some amongst the Byzantine Cæsars, who broke in pieces what they considered superstitious images.

This work was drawn up with the usual polemic ability of Milton; but by its very plan and purpose, it threw him upon difficulties which no ability could meet. It had that inevitable disadvantage which belongs to all ministerial and secondary works; the order and choice of topics being all determined by the Eikon, Milton, for the first time, wore an air of constraint and servility, following a leader and obeying his motions, as an engraver is controlled by the designer, or a translator by his original. It is plain, from the pains he took to exonerate himself from such a reproach, that he felt his task to be an invidious one. The majesty of grief, expressing itself with Christian meekness, and appealing, as it were, from the grave to the consciences of men, could not be violated without a recoil of angry feeling, ruinous to the effect of any logic, or rhetoric the most persuasive. The affliction of a great prince, his solitude, his rigorous imprisonment, his constancy to some purposes which were not selfish, his dignity of demeanor in the midst of his heavy trials, and his truly Christian fortitude in his final sufferings,—these formed a rhetoric which made its way to all hearts. Against such influences the eloquence of Greece

would have been vain. The nation was spell-bound; and a majority of its population neither could nor would be disenchanted.

Milton was ere long called to plead the same great cause upon an ampler stage, and before an audience less preoccupied with hostile views; to plead, not on behalf of his party against the Presbyterians and Royalists, but on behalf of his country against the insults of a hired Frenchman, and at the bar of the whole Christian world. Charles II. had resolved to state his father's case to all Europe. This was natural, for very few people on the Continent knew what cause had brought his father to the block, or why he himself was a vagrant exile from his throne. For his advocate he selected Claudius Salmasius, and that was most injudicious. This man, eminent among the scholars of the day, had some brilliant accomplishments, which were useless in such a service, while in those which were really indispensable he was singularly deficient. He was ignorant of the world, wanting in temper and self-command, conspicuously unfurnished with eloquence, or the accomplishments of a good writer, and not so much as master of a pure Latin style. Even as a scholar he was very unequal; he had committed more important blunders than any man of his age, and, being generally hated, had been more frequently exposed than others to the harsh chastisements of men inferior to himself in learning. Yet the most remarkable deficiency of all which Salmasius betrayed, was in his entire ignorance, whether historical or constitutional, of everything which belonged to the case.

Having such an antagonist, inferior to him in all possible qualifications, whether of nature, of art, of situation, it may be supposed that Milton's triumph was absolute. He was now thoroughly indemnified for the poor success

of his "Eikonoclastes." In that instance he had the mortification of knowing that all England read and wept over the king's book, whilst his own reply was scarcely heard of. But here the tables were turned; the very friends of Salmasius complained, that, while his defence was rarely inquired after, the answer to it, "*Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*," was the subject of conversation from one end of Europe to the other. It was burnt publicly at Paris and Toulouse; and, by way of special annoyance to Salmasius, who lived in Holland, was translated into Dutch.

Salmasius died in 1653, before he could accomplish an answer which satisfied himself; and the fragment which he left behind him was not published, until it was no longer safe for Milton to rejoin. Meantime, others pressed forward against Milton in the same controversy, of whom some were neglected, one was resigned to the pen of his nephew Philips, and one answered diffusely by himself. This was Du Moulin, or, as Milton persisted in believing, Morus, a Reformed minister then resident in Holland, and at one time a friend of Salmasius. Two years after the publication of this man's book, ("*Regii Sanguinis Clamor*,") Milton received multiplied assurances from Holland that Morus was its true author. This was not wonderful. Morus had corrected the press, had adopted the principles and passions of the book, and perhaps at first had not been displeased to find himself reputed the author. In reply, Milton published his "*Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano*," seasoned in every page with some stinging allusions to Morus. All the circumstances of his early life were recalled, and some were such as the grave divine would willingly have concealed from the public eye. He endeavored to avert too late the storm of wit and satire about to burst on him, by denying

the work, and even revealing the author's real name; but Milton resolutely refused to make the slightest alteration. The true reason of this probably was that the work was written so exclusively against Morus, full of personal scandal, and puns and gibes upon his name, which in Greek signifies a fool, that it would have been useless and irrelevant as an answer to any other person. In Milton's conduct on this occasion, there is a want both of charity and candor. Personally, however, Morus has little ground for complaint; he had bearded the lion by submitting to be reputed the author of a work not his own. Morus replied, and Milton closed the controversy by a defence of himself, in 1655.

He had, indeed, about this time some domestic afflictions, which reminded him of the frail tenure on which all human blessings were held, and the necessity that he should now begin to concentrate his mind upon the great works which he meditated. In 1651 his first wife died, after she had given him three daughters. In that year he had already lost the use of one eye, and was warned by the physicians, that, if he persisted in his task of replying to Salmasius, he would probably lose the other. The warning was soon accomplished; according to the common account, in 1654; but upon collating his letter to Philaras the Athenian with his own pathetic statement in the "*Defensio Secunda*," we are disposed to date it from 1652. In 1655 he resigned his office of secretary, in which he had latterly been obliged to use an assistant.

Some time before this period, he had married his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, to whom it is supposed that he was very tenderly attached. In 1657 she died in childbirth, together with her child, an event which he has recorded in a very beautiful sonnet. This loss, added to his blindness, must have made his home, for some years, deso-

late and comfortless. Distress, indeed, was now gathering rapidly upon him. The death of Cromwell in the following year, and the unambitious character of his eldest son, held out an invitation to the ambitious intriguers of the day, which they were not slow to improve. It soon became too evident to Milton's discernment, that all things were hurrying forward to restoration of the ejected family. Sensible of the risk, therefore, and without much hope, but obeying the summons of his conscience, he wrote a short tract on the ready and easy way to establish a free commonwealth, concluding with those noble words, "Thus much I should perhaps have said, though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones, and had none to cry to, but with the prophet, O earth! earth! earth! to tell the very soil itself what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to. Nay, though what I have spoken should happen [which Thou suffer not, who didst create free, nor Thou next, who didst redeem us from being servants of men] to be the last words of our expiring liberty." A slighter pamphlet on the same subject, "Brief Notes" upon a sermon by one Dr. Griffiths, must be supposed to be written rather with a religious purpose of correcting a false application of sacred texts, than with any great expectation of political benefit to his party. Dr. Johnson, with his customary insolence, says, that he kicked when he could strike no longer: more justly it might be said, that he held up a solitary hand of protestation on behalf of that cause, now in its expiring struggles, which he had maintained when prosperous; and that he continued to the last one uniform language, though he now believed resistance to be hopeless, and knew it to be full of peril.

That peril was soon realized. In the spring of 1660, the Restoration was accomplished, amidst the tumultuous rejoicings of the people. It was certain that the vengeance

of government would lose no time in marking its victims; for some of them, in anticipation, had already fled. Milton wisely withdrew from the first fury of the persecution which now descended on his party. He secreted himself in London, and when he returned into the public eye, in the winter, found himself no further punished than by a general disqualification for the public service, and the disgrace of a public burning inflicted on his "Eikonoclastes," and his "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano."

Apparently it was not long after this time that he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshul, a lady of good family in Cheshire. In what year he began the composition of his "Paradise Lost" is not certainly known: some have supposed in 1658. There is better ground for fixing the period of its close. During the plague of 1665, he retired to Chalfont, and at that time Elwood the Quaker read the poem in a finished state. The general interruption of business in London, occasioned by the plague, and prolonged by the great fire in 1666, explains why the publication was delayed for nearly two years. The contract with the publisher is dated April 26, 1667, and in the course of that year the "Paradise Lost" was published. Originally it was printed in ten books: in the second and subsequent editions, the seventh and tenth books were each divided into two. Milton received five pounds in the first instance on the publication of the book. His further profits were regulated by the sale of the first three editions. Each was to consist of 1,500 copies, and on the second and third respectively reaching a sale of 1,500, he was to receive a further sum of five pounds for each; making a total of fifteen pounds. The receipt for the second sum of five pounds is dated April 26, 1669.

In 1670, Milton published his "History of Britain," from the fabulous period to the Norman conquest. And in

the same year he published, in one volume, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes." The "Paradise Regained," it has been currently asserted that Milton preferred to "Paradise Lost." This is not true; but he may have been justly offended by the false principles on which some of his friends maintained a reasonable opinion. The "Paradise Regained" is inferior, but only by the necessity of its subject and design, not by less finished composition. In the "Paradise Lost," Milton had a field properly adapted to a poet's purposes: a few hints in Scripture were expanded. Nothing was altered, nothing absolutely added: but that which was told in the Scriptures in sum, or in its last results, was developed into its whole succession of parts. Thus, for instance, "There was war in heaven," furnished the matter for a whole book. Now for the latter poem,—which part of our Saviour's life was it best to select as that in which Paradise was Regained? He might have taken the Crucifixion, and here he had a much wider field than in the Temptation; but then he was subject to this dilemma. If he modified, or in any way altered, the full details of the four Evangelists, he shocked the religious sense of all Christians; yet the purposes of a poet would often require that he should so modify them. With a fine sense of this difficulty, he chose the narrow basis of the Temptation in the Wilderness, because there the whole had been wrapt up by Scripture in a few obscure abstractions. Thus, "He showed him all the kingdoms of the earth," is expanded, without offence to the nicest religious scruple, into that matchless succession of pictures, which bring before us the learned glories of Athens, Rome in her civil grandeur, and the barbaric splendor of Parthia. The actors being only two, the action of "Paradise Regained" is unavoidably limited. But in respect of composition, it is perhaps more elaborately finished than "Paradise Lost."

In 1672, he published in Latin a new scheme of Logic, on the method of Ramus, in which Dr. Johnson suspects him to have meditated the very eccentric crime of rebellion against the Universities. Be that as it may, this little book is in one view not without interest; all scholastic systems of logic confound logic and metaphysics; and some of Milton's metaphysical doctrines, as the present Bishop of Winchester has noticed, have a reference to the doctrines brought forward in his posthumous Theology. The history of the last-named work is remarkable. That such a treatise had existed was well known, but it had disappeared and was supposed to be irrecoverably lost. Meantime, in the year 1823, a Latin manuscript was discovered in the State-Paper Office, under circumstances which leave little doubt of its being the identical work which Milton was known to have composed. By the king's command, it was edited by Mr. Sumner, the present Bishop of Winchester, and separately published in a translation.

What he published after the scheme of logic is not important enough to merit a separate notice. His end was now approaching. In the summer of 1674 he was still cheerful and in the possession of his intellectual faculties. But the vigor of his bodily constitution had been silently giving way, through a long course of years, to the ravages of gout. It was at length thoroughly undermined: and about the 10th of November, 1674, he died with tranquillity so profound, that his attendants were unable to determine the exact moment of his decease. He was buried, with unusual marks of honor, in the chancel of St. Giles's, at Cripplegate.

²⁶ [The published lives of Milton are very numerous. Among the best and most copious are those prefixed to the editions of Milton's Works, by Bishop Newton, secondly

by Todd, and thirdly by Symmons. An article of considerable length, founded upon the latter, will be found in Rees's *Cyclopædia*. But the most remarkable is that written by Dr. Johnson in his *Lives of the British Poets*; a production grievously disfigured by prejudice, yet well deserving the student's attention, for its intrinsic merits, as well as for the celebrity which it has attained.]

MILTON.³⁷

WE have two ideas, which we are anxious to bring under public notice, with regard to Milton. The reader whom Providence shall send us will not measure the value of these ideas (we trust and hope) by their bulk. The reader indeed — that great idea! — is very often a more important person towards the fortune of an essay than the writer. Even “the prosperity of a jest,” as Shakspeare tells us, lies less in its own merit than “in the ear of him that hears it.” If *he* should happen to be unusually obtuse, the wittiest jest perishes, the most pointed is found blunt. So, with regard to books, should the reader on whom we build prove a sandy and treacherous foundation, the whole edifice, “temple and tower,” must come to the ground. Should it happen, for instance, that the reader, inflicted upon ourselves for our sins, belongs to that class of people who listen to books in the ratio of their much speaking, find no eloquence in 32mo, and little force of argument except in such a folio as might knock him down upon occasion of his proving restive against its logic — in that case he will despise our present essay. *Will* despise it? He *does* despise it, for already he sees that it is short. His contempt is a high *a priori* contempt; for he measures us by antici

patron, and needs to wait for no experience in order to vindicate his sentence against us.

Yet, in one view, this brevity of an essayist does seem to warrant his reader in some little indignation. We, the writer, in many cases expect to bring over the reader to our opinion—else wherefore do we write? But, within so small a compass of ground, is it reasonable to look for such a result? “Bear witness to the presumption of this essay,” we hear the reader complaining: “It measures about fourteen inches by five—seventy square inches at the most; and is it within human belief that I, simple as I stand here, shall be converted in so narrow an area? Here am I in a state of nature, as you may say. An acre of sound argument might do something; but here is a man who flatters himself that, before I am advanced seven inches further in my studies, he is to work a notable change in my creed. By Castor and Pollux! he must think very superbly of himself, or very meanly of me.”

Too true; but perhaps there are faults on both sides. The writer is too peremptory and exacting; the reader is too restive. The writer is too full of his office, which he fancies is that of a teacher or a professor speaking *ex cathedra*: the rebellious reader is oftentimes too determined that he will not learn. The one conceits himself booted and spurred, and mounted on his reader's back, with an express commission for riding him; the other is vicious, apt to bolt out of the course at every opening, and resolute in this point, that he will not be ridden.

There are some, meantime, who take a very different

view of the relations existing between those well-known parties to a book — writer and reader. So far from regarding the writer as entitled to the homage of his reader, as if he were some feudal superior, they hold him little better than an actor bowing before the reader as his audience. The feudal relation of fealty* (*fidelitas*) may subsist between them, but the places are inverted: the writer is the vassal; the reader it is who claims to be the sovereign. Our own opinion inclines this way. It is clear that the writer exists for the sake of the reader, not the reader for the sake of the writer. Besides, the writer bears all sorts of characters, whilst the reader universally has credit for the best. We have all heard of “the courteous reader,” “the candid reader,” “the enlightened reader;” but which of us ever heard of “the discourteous reader,” “the mulish reader,” “the barbarous reader?” Doubtless there is no such person. The Goths and Vandals are all confined to the writers. “The reader” — that great character — is ever wise, ever learned, ever courteous. Even in the worst of times, this great man preserved his purity. Even in the tenth and eleventh centuries, which we usually account the very

* Which word *fealty* I entreat the reader, for the credit of his own scholarship, not to pronounce as a dissyllable, but *fe-al-ty*, as a trissyllable; else he ruins the metrical beauty of Chaucer, of Shakspeare, of Spenser, of Milton, and of every poet through four centuries (the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, down to 1699), and finally registers himself as an *ignoramus* and a blockhead. For the reason lies in the etymology: it is a contracted form of *fidelit̄*, or feudal loyalty. How does the reader pronounce *real* or *reality*? Surely he does not say *reel*, or *celity*: if re-al, then he can say fe-al.

noontide of darkness, he shone like a mould candle among basest dips. And perhaps it is our duty to presume all other virtues and graces as no less essential to him than his glorious "candor," his "courtesy," (surpassing that of Sir Gawain)*, and his truly "enlightened" understanding. Indeed, we very much question whether a writer, who carries with him a just feeling of his allegiance — a truly loyal writer — can lawfully suppose his sovereign, the reader, peccable or capable of error; and whether there is not even a shade of impiety in conceiving him liable to the affections of sleep, or of yawning.

Having thus, upon our knees, as it were, done feudal homage to our great *suzerain*, the reader — having propitiated him with Persian adorations and with Phrygian genuflexions, let us now crave leave to convert him a little. Convert him! — that sounds "*un peu fort*," does it not? No, not at all. A cat may look at a king; and upon this or that out-of-the-way point a writer may presume to be more knowing than his reader — the serf may undertake to convert his lord. The reader is a great being — a great noun-substantive; but still, like a mere adjective, he is liable to the three degrees of comparison. He may rise above himself — he may transcend the ordinary level of readers, however exalted that level be. Being great, he may become greater. Full of light, he may yet labor with a spot or two of darkness. And such a spot we hold the prevalent opinion upon Milton in two

* "*Sir Gawain*:" — In all the old metrical romances, this knight is celebrated for his unique courtesy.

particular questions of taste — questions that are not insulated, but diffusive; spreading themselves over the entire surface of the “Paradise Lost,” and also of the “Paradise Regained;” insomuch that, if Milton is wrong once, then he is wrong by many scores of times. Nay, which transcends all counting of cases or numerical estimates of error, if, in the separate instances (be they few or be they many), Milton is truly and indeed wrong — then he has erred, not by the case, but by the principle; and that is a thousand times worse; for a separate case or instance of error may escape any man — may have been overlooked amongst the press of objects crowding on his eye; or, if *not* overlooked — if passed deliberately — may plead the ordinary privilege of human frailty. The man erred; and his error terminates in itself. But an error of principle does *not* terminate in itself: it is a fountain, it is self-diffusive, and it has a life of its own. The faults of a great man are in any case contagious; they are dazzling and delusive by means of the great man’s general example. But his false principles have a worse contagion. They operate not only through the general haze and halo which invests a shining example; but, even if transplanted where that example is unknown, they propagate themselves by the vitality inherent in all self-consistent principles, whether true or false.

Before we notice these two cases of Milton, first of all let us ask — Who and what *is* Milton? Dr. Johnson was furiously incensed with a certain man, by trade an author and manufacturer of books, wholesale and retail, for introducing Milton’s name into a certain index,

under the letter M, thus — “Milton, Mr. John.” That *Mister*, undoubtedly, was hard to digest. Yet very often it happens to the best of us — to men who are far enough from “thinking small beer of themselves” — that about ten o’clock, A. M., an official big-wig, sitting at Bow Street, calls upon the man to account for his *sprees* of the last night, for his feats in knocking down lamp-posts and extinguishing watchmen, by this ugly demand of — “Who and what are you, sir?” And perhaps the poor man, sick and penitential for want of soda water, really finds a considerable difficulty in replying satisfactorily to the worthy *beek’s* apostrophe. Although, at five o’clock in the evening, should the culprit be returning into the country in the same coach as his awful interrogator, he might be very apt to look fierce, and retort this amiable inquiry, and with equal thirst for knowledge to demand, “Now, sir, if you come to *that*, who and what are *you*?” And the *beek* in *his* turn, though so apt to indulge his own curiosity at the expense of the public, might find it very difficult to satisfy that of others.

The same thing happens to authors; and to great authors beyond all others. So accustomed are we to survey a great man through the cloud of years that has gathered round him — so impossible is it to detach him from the pomp and equipage of all who have quoted him, copied him, echoed him, lectured about him, disputed about him, quarrelled about him, that in the case of any Anacharsis the Scythian coming amongst us — any savage, that is to say, uninstructed in our literature, but speaking our language, and feeling an intelligent interest in our great men — a man could hardly

believe at first how perplexed he would feel — how utterly at a loss for any *adequate* answer to this question, suddenly proposed — “*Who and what was Milton?*” That is to say, what is the place which he fills in his own vernacular literature? what station does he hold in universal literature?

I, if abruptly called upon in that summary fashion to convey a *commensurate* idea of Milton, one which might at once correspond to his pretensions, and yet be readily intelligible to the savage, should answer perhaps thus: — Milton is not an author amongst authors, not a poet amongst poets, but a power amongst powers; and the “*Paradise Lost*” is not a book amongst books, not a poem amongst poems, but a central force amongst forces. Let me explain. There is this great distinction amongst books: some, though possibly the best in their class, are still no more than books — not indispensable, not incapable of supplementary representation by other books. If they had never been — if their place had continued for ages unfilled — not the less, upon a sufficient excitement arising, there would always have been found the ability, either directly to fill up the vacancy, or at least to meet the same passion virtually, though by a work differing in form. Thus, supposing Butler to have died in youth, and the “*Hudibras*” to have been intercepted by his premature death, still the ludicrous aspects of the Parliamentary War, and its fighting saints, were too striking to have perished. If not in a narrative form, the case would have come forward in the drama. Puritanical sanctity, in collision with the ordinary interests of life, and with its militant propen-

sities, offered too striking a field for the Satiric Muse, in any case, to have passed in total neglect. The impulse was too strong for repression — it was a volcanic agency, that, by some opening or other, must have worked a way for itself to the upper air. Yet Butler was a most original poet, and a creator within his own province. But, like many another original mind, there is little doubt that he quelled and repressed, by his own excellence, other minds of the same cast. Mere despair of excelling him, so far as not, after all, to seem imitators, drove back others who would have pressed into that arena, if not already brilliantly filled. Butler failing, there would have been another Butler, either in the same, or in some analogous form.

But, with regard to Milton and the Miltonic power, the case is far otherwise. If the man had failed, the power would have failed. In that mode of power which he wielded, the function was exhausted in the man — the species was identified with the individual — the poetry was incarnated in the poet.

Let it be remembered, that, of all powers which act upon man through his intellectual nature, the very rarest is that which we moderns call the *sublime*. The Grecians had apparently no word for it, unless it were that which they meant by *το σεμνον*: for *ἕψος* was a comprehensive expression of all qualities which gave a character of life or animation to the composition, such even as were philosophically opposed to the sublime. In the Roman poetry, and especially in Lucan, at times also in Juvenal, there is an exhibition of a moral sublime, perfectly distinct from anything known to

the Greek poetry. The delineations of republican grandeur, as expressing itself through the principal leaders in the Roman camps, or the trampling under foot of ordinary superstitions, as given in the reasons assigned to Labienus for passing the oracle of the Libyan Jupiter unconsulted, are in a style to which there is nothing corresponding in the whole Grecian literature, nor would they have been comprehensible to an Athenian. The famous line — “Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris,” and the brief review of such questions as might be worthy of an oracular god, with the summary declaration, that every one of those points we know already by the light of nature, and could not know them better though Jupiter Ammon himself were to impress them on our attention —

“Scimus, et hæc nobis non altius inseret Ammon :”

“We know it, and no Ammon will ever sink it deeper into our hearts;”

all this is truly Roman in its sublimity; and so exclusively Roman, that there, and not in poets like the Augustan, expressly modelling their poems on Grecian types, ought the Roman mind to be studied.

On the other hand, for that species of the sublime which does not rest purely and merely on moral energies, but on a synthesis between man and nature — for what may properly be called the Ethico-physical Sublime — there is but one great model surviving in the Greek poetry — viz., the gigantic drama of the Prometheus crucified on Mount Elborus. And this drama differs so much from everything else, even in the poetry

of Æschylus, as the mythus itself differs so much from all the rest of the Grecian mythology (belonging apparently to an age and a people more gloomy, austere, and nearer to the *incunabula mundi*, than those which bred the gay and sunny superstitions of Greece), that much curiosity and speculation have naturally gathered round the subject of late years. Laying this one insulated case apart, and considering that the Hebrew poetry of Isaiah and Ezekiel, as having the benefit of inspiration, does not lie within the just limits of competition, we may affirm that there is no human composition which can be challenged as constitutionally sublime — sublime equally by its conception and by its execution, or as uniformly sublime from first to last, excepting the “Paradise Lost.” In Milton only, first and last, is the power of the sublime revealed. In Milton only does this great agency blaze and glow as a furnace kept up to a white heat — without suspicion of collapse.

If, therefore, Milton occupies this unique position — and let the reader question himself closely whether he can cite any other book than the “Paradise Lost,” as continuously sublime, or sublime even by its prevailing character — in that case there is a peculiarity of importance investing that one book which belongs to no other; and it must be important to dissipate any erroneous notions which affect the integrity of that book’s estimation. Now, there are two notions countenanced by Addison and by Dr. Johnson, which tend greatly to disparage the character of its composition. If the two critics, one friendly, the other very malignant, but both endeavoring to be just, have in reality built

upon sound principles, or at least upon a sound appreciation of Milton's principles — in that case there is a mortal taint diffused over the whole of the "Paradise Lost:" for not a single book is clear of one or other of the two errors which they charge upon him. We will briefly state the objections, and then as briefly reply to them, by exposing the true philosophy of Milton's practice. For we are very sure that, in doing as he did, this mighty poet was governed by no carelessness or oversight (as is imagined), far less by affectation or ostentation, but by a most refined theory of poetic effects.

1. The first of these two charges respects a supposed pedantry, or too ambitious a display of erudition. It is surprising to us that such an objection should have occurred to any man; both because, after all, the quantity of learning cannot be great for which any poem can find an opening; and because, in any poem burning with concentrated fire, like the Miltonic, the passion becomes a law to itself, and will not receive into connection with itself any parts so deficient in harmony, as a cold ostentation of learned illustrations must always have been found. Still, it is alleged that such words as *frieze*, *architrave*, *cornice*, *zenith*, &c., are words of art, out of place amongst the primitive simplicities of Paradise, and at war with Milton's purpose of exhibiting the paradisaical state.

Now, here is displayed broadly the very perfection of ignorance, as measured against the very perfection of what may be called poetic science. We will lay open the true purpose of Milton by a single illustration. In describing impressive scenery, as occurring

in a hilly or a woody country, everybody must have noticed the habit which young ladies have of using the word *amphitheatre*: “amphitheatre of woods” — “amphitheatre of hills,” — these are their constant expressions. Why? Is it because the word *amphitheatre* is a Grecian word? We question if one young lady in twenty knows that it is; and very certain we are that no word would recommend itself to her use by that origin, if she happened to be aware of it. The reason lurks here: — In the word *theatre* is contained an evanescent image of a great audience — of a populous multitude. Now, this image — half-withdrawn, half-flashed upon the eye — and combined with the word *hills* or *forests*, is thrown into powerful collision with the silence of hills — with the solitude of forests; each image, from reciprocal contradiction, brightens and vivifies the other. The two images act, and react, by strong repulsion and antagonism.

This principle I might exemplify, and explain at great length; but I impose a law of severe brevity upon myself. And I have said enough. Out of this one principle of subtle and lurking antagonism, may be explained everything which has been denounced under the idea of pedantry in Milton. It is the key to all that lavish pomp of art and knowledge which is sometimes put forward by Milton in situations of intense solitude, and in the bosom of primitive nature — as, for example, in the Eden of his great poem, and in the Wilderness of his “Paradise Regained.” The shadowy exhibition of a regal banquet in the desert, draws out and stimulates the sense of its utter solitude and remoteness from men or cities. The images of

architectural splendor, suddenly raised in the very centre of Paradise, as vanishing shows by the wand of a magician, bring into powerful relief the depth of silence, and the unpopulous solitude which possess this sanctuary of man whilst yet happy and innocent. Paradise could not, in any other way, or by any artifice less profound, have been made to give up its essential and differential characteristics in a form palpable to the imagination. As a place of rest, it was necessary that it should be placed in close collision with the unresting strife of cities; as a place of solitude, with the image of tumultuous crowds; as the centre of mere natural beauty in its gorgeous prime, with the images of elaborate architecture and of human workmanship; as a place of perfect innocence in seclusion, that it should be exhibited as the antagonist pole to the sin and misery of social man.

Such is the covert philosophy which governs Milton's practice, and which might be illustrated by many scores of passages from both the "Paradise Lost" and the "Paradise Regained." * In fact, a volume might be composed on this one chapter. And yet, from the

* For instance, this is the key to that image in the "Paradise Regained," where Satan, on first emerging into sight, is compared to an old man gathering sticks "to warm him on a winter's day." This image, at first sight, seems little in harmony with the wild and awful character of the supreme fiend. No; it is *not in* harmony; nor is it meant to be in harmony. On the contrary, it is meant to be in antagonism and intense repulsion. The household image of old age, of human infirmity, and of domestic hearths, are all meant as a machinery for provoking and soliciting the fearful idea to which they are placed in collision and as so many repelling poles.

blindness or inconsiderate examination of his critics, this latent wisdom — this cryptical science of poetic effects — in the mighty poet has been misinterpreted, and set down to the effect of defective skill, or even of puerile ostentation.

2. The second great charge against Milton is, *primi facie*, even more difficult to meet. It is the charge of having blended the Pagan and Christian forms. The great realities of angels and archangels are continually combined into the same groups with the fabulous impersonations of the Greek mythology. Eve is inter-linked in comparisons with Pandora, with Aurora, with Proserpine. Those impersonations, however, may be thought to have something of allegoric meaning in their conceptions, which in a measure corrects this Paganism of the idea. But Eve is also compared with Ceres, with Hebe, and other fixed forms of Pagan superstition. Other allusions to the Greek mythologic forms, or direct combination of them with the real existences of the Christian heavens, might be produced by scores, were it not that we decline to swell our paper beyond the necessity of the case. Now, surely this at least is an error. Can there be any answer to this?

At one time we were ourselves inclined to fear that Milton had been here caught tripping. In this instance, at least, he seems to be in error. But there is no trusting to appearances. In meditating upon the question, we happened to remember that the most colossal and Miltonic of painters had fallen into the very same fault, if fault it were. In his "Last Judgment," Michael Angelo has introduced the Pagan deities

in connection with the hierarchy of the Christian heavens. Now, it is very true that one great man cannot palliate the error of another great man, by repeating the same error himself. But, though it cannot avail as an excuse, such a conformity of ideas serves as a summons to a much more vigilant examination of the case than might else be instituted. One man might err from inadvertency; but that two, and both men trained to habits of constant meditation, should fall into the same error — makes the marvel tenfold greater.

Now we confess that, as to Michael Angelo, we do not pretend to assign the precise key to the practice which he adopted. And to our feelings, after all that might be said in apology, there still remains an impression of incongruity in the visual exhibition and direct juxtaposition of the two orders of supernatural existence so potently repelling each other. But, as regards Milton, the justification is complete; it rests upon the following principle: —

In all other parts of Christianity, the two orders of superior beings, the Christian Heaven and the Pagan Pantheon, are felt to be incongruous — not as the pure opposed to the impure (for, if that were the reason, then the Christian fiends should be incongruous with the angels, which they are not), — but as the unreal opposed to the real. In all the hands of other poets, we feel that Jupiter, Mercury, Apollo, Diana, are not merely impure conceptions, but that they are baseless conceptions, phantoms of air, nonentities; and there is much the same objection, in point of just taste, to the combination of such fabulous beings in the same groups with glorified saints and angels, as there is to

the combination, by a painter or a sculptor, of real flesh-and-blood creatures, with allegoric abstractions.

This is the objection to such combination in all other poets. But this objection does not apply to Milton: it glances past him; and for the following reason. Milton has himself laid an early foundation for his introduction of the Pagan Pantheon into Christian groups: *the false gods of the heathen world were, according to Milton, the fallen angels*. See his inimitable account of the fallen angels— who and what they subsequently became. In itself, and even if detached from the rest of the “Paradise Lost,” this catalogue is an *ultra-magnificent* poem. They are not false, therefore, in the sense of being unreal, baseless, and having a merely fantastical existence like our European Fairies, but as having drawn aside mankind from a pure worship. As ruined angels under other names, they are no less real than the faithful and loyal angels of the Christian heavens. And in that one difference of the Miltonic creed, which the poet has brought pointedly and elaborately under his reader’s notice by his matchless roll-call of the rebellious angels, and of *their Pagan transformations*, in the very first book of the “Paradise Lost,” is laid beforehand * the amplest foun-

* Other celebrated poets have laid no such preparatory foundations for their intermixture of heathen gods with the heavenly host of the Christian revelation; for example, amongst thousands of others, Tasso, and still more flagrantly, Camoens, who is not content with allusions or references that suppose the Pagan Mythology still substantially existing, but absolutely introduces them as potent agencies amongst superstitious and bigoted worshippers of papal saints. Consequently, they, beyond all apology, are open to the censure which for Milton is subtly evaded.

dation for his subsequent practice; and at the same time, therefore, the amplest answer to the charge preferred against him by Dr. Johnson, and by so many other critics, who had not sufficiently penetrated the latent theory on which he acted.

CHARLEMAGNE.*

HISTORY is sometimes treated under the splendid conception of "philosophy teaching by example," and sometimes as an "old almanac;" and, agreeably to this latter estimate, we ourselves once heard a celebrated living professor † of surgery, who has been since distinguished by royal favor, and honored with a title, making it his boast that he had never charged his memory with one single historical fact; that on the contrary he had, out of profound contempt for a sort of knowledge so utterly without value in his eyes, anxiously sought to extirpate from his remembrance, or, if that were impossible, to perplex and confound, any relics of historical records which might happen to survive from his youthful studies. "And I am happy to say," added he, "and it is consoling to have it in my power conscientiously to declare, that, although I have not been able to dismiss entirely from my mind some ridiculous fact about a succession of four great monarchies, since human infirmity still clings to our best efforts, and will for ever prevent our attaining perfection, still I have happily succeeded in so far confounding

* A paper which arose on the suggestion of the *History of Charlemagne*, by G. P. R. James, Esq. London: Longman & Co., 1832.

† "*A celebrated living professor:*" Living when this was written.

all distinctions of things and persons, of time and of places, that I could not assign the era of any one transaction, as I humbly trust, within a thousand years. The whole vast series of history is become a wilderness to me ; and my mind, as to all such absurd knowledge, under the blessing of Heaven, is pretty nearly a *tabula rasa*." I was present at this *étalage* of ignorance, as perhaps I may already have informed the reader. And the case reminded me of one popularly ascribed to Orator Henley, who, in disputing with some careless fellow in a coffee-house, suddenly arrested his noisy antagonist by telling him that in one short sentence he had perpetrated two enormous mythologic blunders, having interchangeably confounded *Plutus*, the blind god of wealth, with *Pluto*, the gloomy tyrant of the infernal realms. "Confound them, have I?" said the mythologic criminal. "Well, so much the better; confound them both for two old rogues." "But," said Henley, "you have done them both unspeakable wrong." "With all my heart," rejoined the other, "they are heartily welcome to everything unspeakable below the moon: thank God, I know very little of such ruffians." "But how?" said Henley; "do I understand you to mean that you thank God for your ignorance?" "Well, suppose I *do*," said the respondent, "what have *you* to do with that?" "Oh, nothing," cried Henley; "only I should say that in that case, you had a great deal to be thankful for." I was young at that time, little more than a boy, and thirstily I sighed to repeat this little story as applicable to the present case. In fact it was too applicable; and in case Sir Anthony should be of the same opinion, I

remembered seasonably that the finished and accomplished surgeon carries a pocket case of surgical implements ; lancets, for instance, that are loaded with *virus* in every stage of contagion. Might he not inoculate me with *rabies*, with *hydrophobia*, with the plague of Cairo ? On the whole, it seemed better to make play against Sir Anthony with a sudden coruscation of forked logic ; which accordingly I did, insisting upon it that as the true point of ambition was now changed for the philosophic student [the maximum of ignorance being the goal aimed at, and no longer the maximum of light], it had become outrageously vain-glorious in Sir Anthony to rehearse the steps of his own darkness ; that we, the chance-people in Mrs. Montague's drawing-room, were young beginners, novices that had no advantages to give us a chance in such a contest with central darkness in the persons of veteran masters. Mrs. Montague took *my* side, and said that I, for instance, myself did very well, considering how short had been my career as regarded practice, but it was really unfair to look for perfection in a mere beginner. In this Gothic expression of self-congratulation upon the extent of his own ignorance, though doubtless founded upon what the Germans call an *einseitig** or one-sided estimate, there was, however, that sort of truth which is apprehended only by strong minds, such minds as naturally adhere to extreme courses. Certainly the blank knowledge of facts, which is all that most readers gather from their historical studies, is a mere despotism

* Mark, reader, the progress of language, and consequently of novel ideas. This was written nearly thirty years ago, and at that time the term needed an apologetic formula.

of rubbish without cohesion, and resting upon no basis of theory (that is, of general comprehensive survey) applied to the political development of nations, and accounting for the great stages of their internal movements. Rightly and profitably to understand history, it ought to be studied in as many ways as it may be written. History, as a composition, falls into three separate arrangements, obeying three distinct laws, and addressing itself to three distinct objects. Its first and humblest office is to deliver a naked, unadorned exposition of public events and their circumstances. This form of history may be styled the purely Narrative; the second form is that which may be styled the Scenical; and the third the Philosophic. What is meant by Philosophic History is well understood in our present advanced state of society; and few histories are written except in the simplest condition of human culture, which do not in part assume its functions, or which are content to rest their entire attraction upon the abstract interest of facts. The privileges of this form have, however, been greatly abused; and the truth of facts has been so much forced to bend before preconceived theories, whereas every valid theory ought to be abstracted from the facts, that Mr. Southey and others in this day have set themselves to decry the whole genus and class, as essentially at war with the very primary purposes of the art. But, under whatever name, it is evident that philosophy, or an investigation of the true moving forces in every great train and sequence of national events, and an exhibition of the motives and the moral consequences in their largest extent which have concurred with these events, cannot

be omitted in any history above the level of a childish understanding. Mr. Southey himself will be found to illustrate this necessity by his practice, whilst assailing it in principle. As to the other mode of history, history treated scenically, it is upon the whole the most delightful to the reader, and the most susceptible of art and ornament in the hands of a skilful composer. The most celebrated specimen in the vulgar opinion is the *Decline and Fall* of Gibbon. And to this class may in part* be referred the Historical Sketches of Voltaire. Histories of this class proceed upon principles of selection, presupposing in the reader a general knowledge of the great cardinal incidents, and bringing forward into especial notice those only which are susceptible of being treated with distinguished effect.

These are the three separate modes of treating history; each has its distinct purposes; and all must

* *In part* we say, because in part also the characteristic differences of these works depend upon the particular mode of the narrative. For narration itself, as applied to history, admits of a triple arrangement, dogmatic, sceptical, and critical; dogmatic, which adopts the current records without examination; sceptical, as Horace Walpole's *Richard III.*, Malcolm Laing's *Dissertation on Perkin Warbeck*, or on the Gowrie Conspiracy, which expressly undertakes to probe and try the unsound parts of the story; and critical, which, after an examination of this nature, selects from the whole body of materials such as are coherent. There is besides another ground of difference in the quality of historical narratives — viz., between those which move by means of great public events, and those which (like the *Cæsars* of Suetonius and the French Memoirs), postulating all such capital events as are necessarily already known, and keeping them in the background, crowd their foreground with those personal and domestic notices which we call anecdotes.

contribute to make up a comprehensive total of historical knowledge. The first furnishes the facts; the second opens a thousand opportunities for pictures of manners and national temper in every stage of their growth; whilst the third abstracts the political or the ethical moral, and unfolds the philosophy which knits the history of one nation to that of others, and exhibits the whole under their internal connection, as parts of one great process, carrying on the great economy of human improvement by many stages in many regions at one and the same time.

Pursued upon this comprehensive scale, the study of history is the study of human nature. But some have continued to reject it, not upon any objection to the quality of the knowledge gained, but simply on the ground of its limited extent; contending that in public and political transactions, such as compose the matter of history, human nature exhibits itself upon too narrow a scale and under too monotonous an aspect; that under different names, and in connection with different dates and regions, events virtually the same are continually revolving; that whatever novelty may strike the ear, in passages of history taken from periods widely remote, affects the names only, and circumstances that are extra-essential; that the passions meantime, the motives, and (allowing for difference of manners) the means even, are subject to no variety; that in ancient or in modern history there is no real accession made to our knowledge of human nature but that all proceeds by cycles of endless repetition and in fact that, according to the old complaint, "there is nothing new under the sun."

It is not true that "there is nothing new under the sun." This is the complaint, as all men know, of a jaded voluptuary, seeking for a new pleasure and finding none, for reasons which lay in his own vitiated nature. Why did he seek for novelty? Because old pleasures had ceased to stimulate his exhausted organs; and that was reason enough why no new pleasure, had any been found, would operate as such for *him*. The weariness of spirit and the poverty of pleasure, which he bemoaned as belonging to our human condition, were not in reality *objective* (as a German philosopher would express himself), or laid in the nature of things, and thus pressing upon all alike, but *subjective*, that is to say, derived from the peculiar state and affections of his own organs for apprehending pleasure. Not the *τὸ apprehensibile*, but the *τὸ apprehendens*, was in fault; not the pleasures, or the dewy freshness of pleasures had decayed, but the sensibilities of him who thus undertook to appraise them were *blasés* and exhausted.

More truly and more philosophically, it may be said that there is nothing old under the sun, no absolute repetition. It is the well known doctrine of Leibnitz,*

* Leibnitz (who was *twice* in England), when walking in Kensington Gardens with the Princess of Wales, whose admiration oscillated between this great countryman of her own and Sir Isaac Newton, the corresponding idol of her adopted country, took occasion, from the beautiful scene about them, to explain in a lively way, and at the same time to illustrate and verify this favorite thesis. Turning to a gentleman in attendance upon her Royal Highness, he challenged him to produce two leaves from any tree or shrub, which should be exact duplicates or facsimiles of each other in those lines which variegate the surface.

that amongst the familiar objects of our daily experience, there is no perfect identity. All in external nature proceeds by endless variety. Infinite change, illimitable novelty, inexhaustible difference, these are the foundations upon which nature builds and ratifies her purpose of *individuality*; so indispensable, amongst a thousand other great uses, to the very elements of social distinctions and social rights. But for the endless circumstances of difference which characterize external objects, the rights of property, for instance, would have stood upon no certain basis, nor admitted of any general or comprehensive guarantee.

As with external objects, so with human actions: amidst their infinite approximations and affinities, they are separated by circumstances of never-ending diversity. History may furnish her striking correspondences, biography her splendid parallels; Rome may in certain cases appear but the mirror of Athens, England of Rome; and yet, after all, no character can be cited, no great transaction, no revolution of "high-vised cities," no catastrophe of nations, which, in the midst of its resemblances to distant correspondences in other

The challenge was accepted; but the result justified Leibnitz. It is in fact upon this infinite variety in the superficial lines of the human palm, that palmistry is grounded (or the science of divination by the hieroglyphics written on each man's hand), and has its *primâ facie* justification. Were it otherwise, this mode of divination would not have even a *plausible* sanction; for, without the inexhaustible varieties which are actually found in the combination of these lines, and which give to each separate individual his own separate type, the same identical fortunes must be often repeated; and there would be no foundation for assigning to each his peculiar and characteristic destiny.

ages, does not include features of abundant distinction and individualizing characteristics, so many and so important, as to yield its own peculiar matter for philosophical meditation and its own separate moral. Rare is the case in history, or (to speak with suitable boldness) there is none, which does not involve circumstances capable to a learned eye, without any external aid from chronology, of referring it to its own age. The doctrine of Leibnitz, on the grounds of individuality in the objects of sense, may, in fact, be profitably extended to all the great political actions of mankind. Many pass, in a popular sense, for pure transcripts or duplicates of similar cases in past times; but, accurately speaking, none are such truly and substantially. Neither are the differences by which they are severally marked and featured interesting only to the curiosity or to the spirit of minute research. All public acts, in the degree in which they are great and comprehensive, are steeped in living feelings and saturated with the spirit of their own age; and the features of their individuality, that is, the circumstances which chiefly distinguish them from their nearest parallels in other times, and chiefly prevent them from lapsing into blank repetitions of the same identical case, are generally the very cardinal points, the organs, and the depositories which lodge whatever best expresses the temper and tendencies of the age to which they belong. So far are these special points of distinction from being slight or trivial, that in them *par excellence* is gathered and concentrated whatever a political philosopher would be best pleased to insulate and to converge within his field of view.

This, indeed is evident upon consideration; and is in some sense implied in the very verbal enunciation of the proposition: *vi termini*, it should strike every man who reflects, that in great national transactions of different ages, so far resembling each other as to merit the description of *parallels*, all the circumstances of agreement, all those which compose the resemblance, for the very reason that they are *common* to both periods of time, specially and characteristically belong to neither. It is the differential, and not the common, the points of special dissimilitude, not those of general similitude, which manifestly must be looked to for the philosophic valuation of the times or the people, for the adjudication of their peculiar claims in a comparison with other times and other people, and for the appraisement of the progress made, whether positively for its total amount, or relatively to itself, for its rate of advance at each separate stage.

It is in this way of critical examination, that comparison and the collation of apparent parallels, from being a pure amusement of ingenuity, rises to a philosophic labor, and that the study of history becomes at once dignified, and in a most practical sense profitable. It is the opinion of the subtlest and the most combining (if not the most useful) philosopher whom England has produced, that a true knowledge of history confers the gift of prophecy; or that intelligently and sagaciously to have looked backwards, is potentially to have looked forwards. For example, he is of opinion that any student of the great English civil war in the reign of Charles I., who should duly have noted the signs precurrent and concurrent of those days, and

should also have read the contemporary political pamphlets, coming thus prepared, could not have failed, after a corresponding study of the French literature from 1750 to 1788, and, in particular, after collecting the general sense and temper of the French people from the *Cahiers* (or codes of instruction transmitted by the electoral bodies to the members of the first National Assembly), to foresee in clear succession the long career of revolutionary frenzy, which soon afterwards deluged Europe with tears and blood. This may perhaps be conceded, and without prejudice to the doctrine just now delivered, of endless diversity in political events. For it is certain that the political movements of nations obey everlasting laws, and travel through the stages of known cycles, which thus insure enough of resemblance to guarantee the general outline of a sagacious prophecy; whilst, on the other hand, the times, the people, and the extraordinary minds which, in such critical eras, soon reveal themselves at the head of affairs, never fail of producing their appropriate and characteristic results of difference. Sameness enough there will always be to encourage the true political seer, with difference enough to confer upon each revolution its own separate character and its peculiar interest.

All this is strikingly illustrated in the history of those great revolutionary events which belong to the life and times of the Emperor Charlemagne. If any one period in history might be supposed to offer a barren and unprofitable picture of war, rapine and bloodshed, unfeared by characteristic differences, and unimproved by any peculiar moral, it is this section of the Euro-

pean annals. Removed from our present times by a thousand years, divided from us by the profound gulf of what we usually denominate the *dark ages*; placed, in fact, entirely upon the farther * side of that great barrier, this period of history can hardly be expected to receive much light from contemporary documents in an age so generally illiterate. Not from national archives, or state papers, when diplomacy was so rare, when so large a proportion of its simple transactions was conducted by personal intercourse, and after the destruction wrought amongst its slender chancery of written memorials by the revolution of one entire millennium. Still less could we have reason to hope for much light from private memoirs at a period when the means of writing were as slenderly diffused as the motives; when the rare endowments, natural and acquired, for composing history could so seldom happen to coincide with the opportunities for obtaining accurate information; when the writers were so few, and the audience so limited, to which any writers soever could then profitably address themselves. With or without illustration, however, the age itself and its rapid succession of wars between barbarous and semi-barbarous tribes, might, if any one chapter in history, be presumed barren of either interest or instruction, wearisomely monotonous; and, by comparison with any parallel section from the records of other nations in the earliest stages of dawning civilization, offering no

* According to the general estimate of philosophical history the *tenth* century (or perhaps the tenth and the eleventh conjointly) must be regarded as the true meridian, or the perfect midnight, of the dark ages.

one feature of novelty beyond the names of the combatants, their local and chronological relations, and the peculiar accidents and unimportant circumstances of variety in the conduct or issue of the several battles which they fought.

Yet, in contradiction to all these very plausible presumptions, even this remote period teems with its own peculiar and separate instruction. It is the first great station, so to speak, which we reach after entering the portals of modern * history. It presents us with the evolution and propagation of Christianity in its present central abodes; with the great march of civilization, and the gathering within the pale of that mighty agency for elevating human nature, and beneath the gentle yoke of the only true and beneficent religion, of the last rebellious recusants among the European family of nations. We meet, also, in conjunction with the other steps of the vast humanizing process then going on, the earliest efforts at legislation,

* It has repeatedly been made a question, at what era we ought to date the transition from ancient to modern history. This question merits a separate dissertation. Meantime it is sufficient to say in this place, that Justinian in the sixth century will unanimously be referred to the ancient division, Charlemagne in the eighth to the modern. These, then are two limits fixed in each direction; and somewhere between them must lie the frontier line. Now the era of Mahomet in the seventh century is evidently the exact and perfect line of demarcation; not only as pretty nearly bisecting the debatable ground, but also because the rise of the Mohammedan power, as operating so powerfully upon the Christian kingdoms of the south, and through them upon the whole of Christendom, at that time beginning to mould themselves and to knit, marks in the most eminent sense the birth of a new era.

recording, at the same time, the barbarous condition of those for whom they were designed, and the anti-barbarous views, alien or *exotic*, of the legislator, in the midst of his condescensions to the infirmities of his subjects. Here also we meet with the elementary state, growing and as yet imperfectly rooted, of feudalism. Here, too, we behold in their incunabula, forming and arranging themselves under the pressure of circumstances, the existing kingdoms of Christendom. So far then from being a mere echo, or repetition, of analogous passages in history, the period of Charlemagne is novel to the extent of ambitious originality in its instruction, and almost unique in the quality of that instruction. For here only perhaps we see the social system forming itself in the mine, and the very process, as it were, of crystallization going on beneath our eyes. Mr. James, therefore, may be regarded as not less fortunate in the choice of his subject, than meritorious in its treatment; indeed, his work is not so much the best, as the only history of Charlemagne which will hereafter be cited. For it reposes upon a far greater body of research and collation, than has hitherto been applied* even in France, to this interesting theme; and in effect it is the first account of the great emperor and his times which can, with a due valuation of the term, be complimented with the title of a *critical* memoir.

Charlemagne, "the greatest man of the middle

* Or, in fact, than is likely to manifest itself to an unlearned reader of Mr. James's own book; for he has omitted to load his margin with references to authorities in many scores of instances where he might, and perhaps where he ought, to have accredited his narrative by those indications of research.

ages," in the judgment of his present biographer, was born A. D. 742, seven years before his father assumed the *name* of king. This date has been disputed; but, on the whole, we may take it as settled, upon various collateral computations, that the year now assigned is the true one. The place is less certain; but we do not think Mr. James warranted in saying that it is "unknown," if everything is to be pronounced "unknown," for which there is no absolute proof of a kind to satisfy forensic rules of evidence, or which has ever been made a question for debate, in that case we may apply a sponge to the greater part of history before the era of printing. Aix-la-Chapelle, Mr. James goes on to tell us, is *implied* as the birthplace in one of the chief authorities. But our own impression is, that according to the general belief of succeeding ages, it was not Aix-la-Chapelle, but Ingelheim, a village near Mentz, to which that honor belonged. Some have supposed that Carlsburg, in Bavaria, was the true place of his birth; and, indeed, that it drew its name from that distinguished event. Frantzins, in particular, says, that in his day the castle of that place was still shown to travellers with the reverential interest attached to such a pretension. But, after all, he gives his own vote for Ingelheim; and it is singular that he does not so much as mention Aix-la-Chapelle. Of his education and his early years, Mr. James is of opinion that we know as little as of his birthplace. Certainly our information upon these particulars is neither full nor circumstantial; yet we know as much, perhaps, in these respects, of Charlemagne as of Napoleon Bonaparte. And remarkable enough it is, that

not relatively (or making allowances for the age), but absolutely, Charlemagne was much more accomplished than Napoleon in the ordinary business of a *modern* education; Charlemagne, in the middle of the eighth century, than Napoleon in the latter end of the eighteenth. Charlemagne was, in fact, the most accomplished man of his age; Napoleon a sciolist for any age. The tutor of Charlemagne was Peter of Pisa, a man eminent at that time for his attainments in literature (*in re grammaticá*). From him it was that Charlemagne learned Latin and Greek; Greek in such a degree “*ut sufficienter intelligeret,*” and Latin to the extent of using it familiarly and fluently in conversation. Now, as to the man of the eighteenth century, Greek was to him as much a sealed language as Chinese; and, even with regard to Latin, his own secretary doubts upon one occasion, whether he were sufficiently master of it to translate Juvenal’s expressive words of *Panem et Circenses*. Yet he had enjoyed the benefits of an education in a royal college, in a country which regards itself self-complacently as at the head of civilization. Again, there is a pretty strong tradition (which could hardly arise but upon some foundation), that Charlemagne had cultivated the Arabic so far as to talk it,* having no motive to that attainment more urgent than that political considera-

* “*Arabice loquutum esse Aigolando Saracenorum regulo, Turpinus (the famous Archbishop) auctor est; nec id fide indignum. Dum enim in expeditione Hispanicâ præcipuam belli molem in illum vertit, facile temporis tractu notitiam linguæ sibi comparare potuit.*” — FRANTZ. *Hist. Car. Mag.* That is we had time sufficient for this acquisition, and a motive sufficient

tions made it eligible for him to undertake an expedition against those who could negotiate in no other language. Now, let it be considered how very much more powerful arguments there were in Napoleon's position for mastering the German and the English. His continental policy moved entirely upon the pivot of central Europe, that is, the German system of nations, the great federation of powers upon the Rhine and the Danube. And, as to England, his policy and his passions alike pointed in that direction as uniformly and as inevitably as the needle to the pole: every morning, we are told, tossing aside the Paris journals as so many babbling echoes of his own public illusions, expressing rather what was desired, than what was probable, he required of his secretary that he should read off into French the leading newspapers of England. And many were the times when he started up in fury, and passionately taxed his interpreter with mistranslation; sometimes as softening the expressions, sometimes as over-coloring their violence. Evidently he lay at the mercy of one whom he knew to be wanting in honor, and who had it in his power, either by way of abetting any sinister views of his own, or in collusion with others, to suppress, to add, to garble, and in every possible way to color and distort what he was interpreting. Yet neither could this humiliating sense of dependency on the one hand, nor the instant pressure of political interest on the other, ever urge Napoleon to the effort of learning English in the first case, German or Spanish in the second. Charlemagne again cultivated most strenuously and successfully, as an accomplishment peculiarly belonging to the func-

tions of his high station, the art and practice of eloquence; and he had this reward of his exertions — that he was accounted the most eloquent man of his age: “totis viribus ad orationem exercendam conversus naturalem facundiam ita roboravit studio, ut præter [*. propter*] promptum ac profluens sermonis genus facile avi sui eloquentissimus crederetur.” Turn to Bonaparte. It was a saying of his sycophants, that he sometimes spoke like a god, and sometimes worse than the feeblest of mortals. But, says one who knew him well, — the mortal I have often heard, unfortunately never yet the god. He, who sent down this sneer to posterity, was at Napoleon’s right hand on the most memorable occasion of his whole career — that cardinal occasion, as we may aptly term it (for upon *that* his whole fortunes hinged), when he intruded violently upon the Legislative Body, dissolved the Directory, and effected the revolution of the eighteenth Brumaire. That revolution it was which raised him to the Consular power; and by that revolution, considered in its manner and style, we may judge of Napoleon in several of his chief pretensions — courage, presence of mind, dignity, and eloquence; for then, if ever, these qualities were all in instant requisition; one word effectually urged by the antagonist parties, a breath, a gesture, a nod, suitably followed up, would have made the total difference between ruler of France and a traitor hurried away *à la lanterne*. It is true, that the miserable imbecility of all who should have led the hostile parties, the irresolution and the quiet-loving temper of Moreau, the base timidity of Bernadotte, in fact, the total defect of heroic minds amongst the French o

that day, neutralized the defects and more than compensated the blunders of Napoleon. But these were advantages that could not be depended on: a glass of brandy extraordinary might have emboldened the greatest poltroon to do that which, by once rousing a movement of popular enthusiasm, once making a beginning in that direction, would have precipitated the whole affair into hands which must have carried it far beyond the power of any party to control. Never, according to all human calculation, were eloquence and presence of mind so requisite; never was either so deplorably wanting. A passionate exposition of the national degradations inflicted by the imbecility of the directors, an appeal to the assembly as Frenchmen, contrasting the glories of 1796 with the Italian disasters that had followed, might, by connecting the new candidate for power with the public glory, and the existing rulers with all the dishonors which had settled on the French banners, have given an electric shock to the patriotism of the audience, such as would have been capable for the moment of absorbing their feelings as partisans. In a French assembly, movements of that nature, under a momentary impulse, are far from being uncommon. Here then, if never before, here, if never again, the grandeur of the occasion demanded — almost, we might say, implored, and clamorously invoked, the effectual powers of eloquence and perfect self-possession. How was the occasion met? Let us turn to the actual scene, as painted in lively colors by a friend and an eye-witness: * — “ The

* Not having the French original of Bourrienne's work, we are compelled to quote from the current translation, which, how-

accounts brought every instant to General Bonaparte determined him to enter the hall [of the Ancients] and take part in the debate. His entrance was hasty, and in anger; no favorable prognostics of what he would say. The passage by which we entered led directly forward into the middle of the house; our backs were towards the door; Bonaparte had the President on his right; he could not see him quite in front. I found myself on the General's right; our clothes touched: Berthier was on his left. All the harangues composed for Bonaparte after the event differ from each other: no miracle that. There was, in fact, none pronounced to the ancients; unless a broken conversation with the President, carried on without nobleness, propriety, or ever, is everywhere incorrect, and in a degree absolutely astonishing, and, where not incorrect, offensive from vulgarisms or ludicrous expressions. Thus, it translates *un drole*, a droll fellow, wide as the poles from the true meaning; *ce drole-là* means *that scoundrel*. Again, the verb *devoir*, in all tenses (that eternal stumbling-block to bad French scholars), is uniformly mistranslated. As an instance of ignoble language, at p. 294, vol. i., he says, "Josephine was delighted with the disposition of her *good-man*," a word used only by underbred people. But of all the absurdities which disfigure the work, what follows is perhaps the most striking:— 'Kleber,' he says, "took a *precognition* of the army," p. 231, vol. i. A *precognition*! What Pagan ceremony may that be? Know, reader, that this monster of a word is a technical term of Scotch law; and even to the Scotch, excepting those few who know a little of law, absolutely unintelligible. In speaking thus harshly, we are far from meaning anything unkind to the individual translator, whom, on the contrary, for his honorable sentiments in relation to the merits of Bonaparte, we greatly respect. But that has nothing to do with French translation — the condition of which, in this country is perfectly scandalous.

dignity, may be called a speech. We heard only these words — ‘*Brothers in arms — frankness of a soldier.*’ The interrogatories of the President were clear. Nothing could be more confused or worse enounced than the ambiguous and disjointed replies of Bonaparte. He spoke incoherently of volcanoes — secret agitations — victories — constitution violated. He found fault even with the 18th Fructidor, of which he had himself been the prime instigator and most powerful upholder.” [Not, reader, observe, from bold time-serving neglect of his own principles, but from absolute distraction of mind, and incoherency of purpose.] “Then came *Cæsar — Cromwell — Tyrant*” — [allusions which, of all others, were the most unseasonable for that crisis, and for his position.] “He repeated several times — *I have no more than that to tell you*; and he had told them nothing. Then out came the words, — *Liberty, Equality*: for these every one saw he had not come to St. Cloud. Then his action became animated, and we lost him — comprehending nothing beyond *18th Fructidor, 30th Prairial, hypocrites, intriguers; I am not so; I shall declare all; I will abdicate the power when the danger which threatens the Republic has passed.*” Then, after further instances of Napoleon’s falsehood, and the self-contradictory movements of his disjointed babble, the secretary goes on thus: “These interruptions, apostrophes, and interrogations, overwhelmed him; he believed himself lost. The disapprobation became more violent, and his discourse still more wanting in method and coherence. Sometimes he addressed the representatives quite stultified; sometimes the military in the court [*i. e.*, outside], who were be-

yond hearing; then, without any transition, he spoke of the thunder of war, saying, *I am accompanied by the god of war and fortune.* The President then calmly observed to him, that he found nothing, absolutely nothing, upon which they could deliberate; that all he had said was vague. *Explain yourself, unfold the plots into which you have been invited to enter.* Bonaparte repeated the same things; and in what style! No idea in truth can be formed of the whole scene, unless by those present. There was not the least order in all he stammered out (to speak sincerely) with the most inconceivable incoherence. Bonaparte was no orator. Perceiving the bad effect produced upon the meeting by this rhapsody, and the progressive confusion of the speaker, I whispered (pulling his coat gently at the same time) — ‘Retire, General; you no longer know what you are saying.’ I made a sign to Berthier to second me in persuading him to leave the place; when suddenly, after stammering out a few words more, he turned round, saying, ‘Let all who love me follow.’” So ended this famous scene — in which, more than in any other upon record, eloquence and presence of mind were needful. And if it should be said that vagueness was not altogether the least eligible feature in a speech whose very purpose was to confuse, and to leave no room for answer, we reply — true; but then it was the vagueness of art, which promised to be serviceable, and that of preconcerted perplexity, not the vagueness of incoherence and a rhapsody of utter contradiction.*

* Some people may fancy that this scene of that day’s drama was got up merely to save appearances by a semblance of discussion, and that in effect it mattered not how the performance

What a contrast all this to the indefeasible majesty of Charlemagne ; to his courage and presence of mind, which always rose with the occasion ; and above all, to his promptitude of winning eloquence, that *promptum ac profluens genus sermonis*, which caused him to be accounted *avi sui eloquentissimus !*

Passing for a moment to minor accomplishments, we find that Charlemagne excelled in athletic and gymnastic exercises ; he was a *pancratiast*. Bonaparte wanted those even which were essential to his own daily security. Charlemagne swam well ; Bonaparte not at all. Charlemagne was a first-rate horseman even amongst the Franks ; Napoleon rode ill originally, and no practice availed to give him a firm seat, a graceful equestrian deportment, or a skilful bridle hand. In a barbarous age the one possessed all the elegancies and ornamental accomplishments of a gentleman : the other, in a most polished age, and in a nation of even false refinement, was the sole barbarian of his time ; presenting in his deficiencies the picture of a low mechanic, and in his positive qualities the violence and brutality of a savage.* Hence, by the

was conducted where all was scenical, and the ultimate reliance, after all, on the bayonet. But it is certain that this view is erroneous, and that the final decision of the soldiery, even up to the very moment of the crisis, was still doubtful. Some time after this exhibition, "the hesitation reigning among the troops," says Bourrienne, "still continued." And in reality it was a mere accident of pantomime, and a clap-trap of sentiment, which finally gave a sudden turn in Napoleon's favor to their wavering resolutions.

* We have occasionally such expressions as Dryden's — "When wild in woods *the noble savage* ran." These descriptions rest

way, the extreme folly of those who have attempted to trace a parallel between Napoleon and the first Cæsar. The heaven-born Julius, as beyond all dispute the greatest man of ancient history in moral grandeur, and therefore raised unspeakably above comparison with one who was eminent, even amongst ordinary men, for the pettiness of his passions, so also, upon an intellectual trial, will be found to challenge pretty nearly an equal precedency. Meantime, allowing for the inequality of their advantages, even Cæsar would not have disdained a comparison with Charlemagne. All the knowledge current in Rome, Athens, or Rhodes, at the period of Cæsar's youth, the entire cycle of a nobleman's education in a republic where all noblemen were from their birth dedicated to public services, this — together with much and various knowledge peculiar to himself and his own separate objects — had Cæsar mastered; whilst in an age of science, and in a country where the fundamental science of mathematics was generally diffused in unrivalled perfection, it is well ascertained that Bonaparte's knowledge did not go beyond an elementary acquaintance with the first six books of Euclid; but, on the other

upon false conceptions; in fact no such combination anywhere exists as a man having the training of a savage, or occupying the exposed and naked situation of a savage, who is at the same time in any moral sense at liberty to be noble-minded. Men are moulded by the circumstances in which they stand habitually; and the insecurity of savage life, by making it impossible to forego any sort of advantages, obliterates the very idea of honor. Hence, with all savages alike, the point of honor lies in treachery, in stratagem, and the utmost excess of what is dishonorable, according to the estimate of cultivated man.

hand, Charlemagne, even in that early age, was familiar with the intricate mathematics and the elaborate *computus* of Practical Astronomy.

But these collations, it will be said, are upon questions not primarily affecting their peculiar functions. They are questions more or less extrajudicial. The true point of comparison is upon the talents of policy in the first place, and strategies in the second. A trial between two celebrated performers in these departments, is at any rate difficult; and much more so when they are separated by vast intervals of time. Allowances must be made, so many and so various; compensations or balances struck upon so many diversities of situation; there is so much difference in the modes of warfare — offensive and defensive; the financial means, the available alliances, and other resources, are with so much difficulty appraised — in order to raise ourselves to that station from which the whole question can be overlooked, that nothing short of a general acquaintance with the history, statistics, and diplomacy of the two periods, can lay a ground for the solid adjudication of so large a comparison. Meantime, in the absence of such an investigation, pursued upon a scale of suitable proportions, what if we should sketch a rapid outline (*ὡς ἐν τυπῷ περιλάβειν*) of its *elements* (to speak by a metaphor borrowed from practical astronomy) — *i. e.*, of the principal and most conspicuous points which its path would traverse? How much these two men, each central to a mighty system in his own days, how largely and essentially they differed, whether in kind or in degree of merit, will appear in the course even of the hastiest sketch. The circum-

stances in which they agreed, and that these were sufficient to challenge an inquiry into their characteristic differences, and to support the interest of such an inquiry, will probably be familiar to most readers, as among the commonplaces of general history which survive even in the daily records of conversation. Few people can fail to know — that each of these memorable men stood at the head of a new era in European history, and of a great movement in the social development of nations; that each laid the foundations for a new dynasty in his own family, the one by building forwards upon a basis already formed by his two immediate progenitors, the other by dexterously applying to a great political crisis his own military preponderance; and, finally, that each forfeited within a very brief period — the one in his own person, the other in the persons of his immediate descendants — the giddy ascent which he had mastered, and all the distinctions which it conferred; in short, that “Time, which gave, did his own gifts confound;” * but with this mighty difference — that Time co-operated in the one case with extravagant folly in the individual, and in the other with the irresistible decrees of Providence.

Napoleon Bonaparte and Charlemagne were both, in a memorable degree, the favorites of fortune. It is true, that the latter found himself by inheritance in possession of a throne, which the other ascended by the fortunate use of his own military advantages. But the throne of Charlemagne had been recently won by his family, and in a way so nearly corresponding to

* Shakspeare's Sonnets.

that which was afterwards pursued by Napoleon, that in effect, considering how little this usurpation had been hallowed by time, the throne might, in each case, if not won precisely on the same terms, be considered to be held by the same tenure. Charlemagne, not less than Napoleon, was the privileged child of revolution: he was required by the times, and indispensable to the crisis which had arisen for the Franks; and he was himself protected by the necessities to which he ministered. Clouds had risen, or were rising, at that era, on every quarter of France; from every side she was menaced by hostile demonstrations; and without the counsels of a Charlemagne, and with an energy of action inferior to his, it is probable that she would have experienced misfortunes which, whilst they depressed herself, could not but have altered the destinies of Christendom for many ages to come. The resources of France, it is true, were immense; and, as regarded the positions of her enemies, they were admirably concentrated. But to be made available in the whole extent which the times demanded, it was essential that they should be wielded by a first-rate statesman, supported by a first-rate soldier. The statesman and the soldier were fortunately found united in the person of one man; and that man, by the rarest of combinations, the same who was clothed with the supreme power of the state. Less power, or power less harmonious, or power the most consummate administered with less absolute skill, would doubtless have been found incompetent to struggle with the tempestuous assaults which then lowered over the entire frontier of France. It was natural, and, upon the known constitution of

human nature, pretty nearly inevitable, that, in the course of the very extended warfare which followed, love for that glorious trade — so irritating and so contagious — should be largely developed in a mind as aspiring as Charlemagne's, and stirred by such generous sensibilities. Yet is it in no one instance recorded, that these sympathies with the pomp and circumstance of war, moved him to undertake so much as a single campaign, or an expedition which was not otherwise demanded by his judgment, or that they interfered even to bias or give an impulse to his judgment, where it had previously wavered. In every case he tried the force of negotiation before he appealed to arms; nay, sometimes he condescended so far in his love of peace, as to attempt purchasing with gold, rights or concessions of expediency, which he knew himself in a situation amply to extort by arms. Nor, where these courses were unavailing, and where peace was no longer to be maintained by any sacrifices, is it ever found that Charlemagne, in adopting the course of war, suffered himself to pursue it as an end valuable in and for itself. And yet *that* is a result not uncommon; for a long and conscientious resistance to a measure originally tempting to the feelings, once being renounced as utterly unavailing, not seldom issues in a headlong surrender of the heart to purposes so violently thwarted for a time. And even as a means, war was such in the eyes of Charlemagne to something beyond the customary ends of victory and domestic security. Of all conquerors, whose history is known sufficiently to throw light upon their motives, Charlemagne is the only one who looked forward to the

benefit of those he conquered, as a principal element amongst the fruits of conquest. "Doubtless," says his present biographer, "to defend his own infringed territory, and to punish the aggressors, formed a part of his design; but, beyond that, he aimed at civilizing a people whose barbarism had been for centuries the curse of the neighboring countries, and at the same time communicating to the cruel savages, who shed the blood of their enemies less in the battle than in the sacrifice, the bland and mitigating spirit of the Christian religion."

This applies more particularly and circumstantially to his Saxon campaigns; but the spirit of the remark is of general application. At that time a weak light of literature was beginning to diffuse improvement in Italy, in France, and in England. France, by situation geographically, and politically by the prodigious advantage (which she exclusively enjoyed) of an undivided government, with the benefit consequently of an entire unity in her counsels, was peculiarly fitted for communicating the blessings of intellectual culture to the rest of the European continent, and for sustaining the great mission of civilizing conquest. Above all, as the great central depository of Christian knowledge, she seemed specially stationed by Providence as a martial apostle for carrying by the sword that mighty blessing, which, even in an earthly sense, Charlemagne could not but value as the best engine of civilization, to the potent infidel nations on her southern and eastern frontier. A vast revolution was at hand for Europe; all her tribes were destined to be fused in a new crucible, to be recast in happier moulds, and to form

one family of enlightened nations, to compose one great collective brotherhood, united by the tie of a common faith and a common hope, and hereafter to be known to the rest of the world, and to proclaim this unity, under the comprehensive name of *Christendom*. Baptism, therefore, was the indispensable condition and forerunner of civilization; and from the peculiar ferocity and the sanguinary superstitions which disfigured the Pagan nations in Central Europe, of which the leaders and the nearest to France were the Saxons, and from the bigotry and arrogant intolerance of the Mohammedan nations who menaced her Spanish frontier, it was evident that by the sword only it was possible that baptism should be effectually propagated. War, therefore, for the highest purposes of peace, became the present and instant policy of France; bloodshed for the sake of a religion the most benign; and desolation with a view to permanent security. The Frankish emperor was thus invited to indulge in this most captivating of luxuries — the royal tiger-hunt of war; as being also at this time, and for a special purpose, the sternest of duties. He had a special dispensation for wielding at times a barbarian and exterminating sword, but for the extermination of barbarism; and he was privileged to be in a single instance an Attila, in order that Attilas might no more arise. Simply as the enemies, bitter and perfidious of France, the Saxons were a legitimate object of war; as the standing enemies of civilization, who would neither receive it for themselves, nor tolerate its peaceable enjoyment in others, they and Charlemagne stood opposed to each other as it were by hostile instincts. And

this most merciful of conquerors was fully justified in departing for once, and in such a quarrel, from his general rule of conduct; and for a paramount purpose of comprehensive service to all mankind, we entirely agree with Mr. James, that Charlemagne had a sufficient plea, and that he has been censured only by calumnious libellers, or by the feeble-minded, for applying a Roman severity of punishment to treachery continually repeated. The question is one purely of policy; and it may be, as Mr. James is disposed to think, that in point of judgment the emperor erred; but certainly the case was one of great difficulty; for the very infirmity even of maternal indulgence, if obstinately and continually abused, must find its ultimate limit; and we have no right to suppose that Charlemagne made his election for the harsher course without a violent self-conflict. His former conduct towards those very people, his infinite forbearance, his long-suffering, his monitory threats, all make it a duty to presume that he suffered the acutest pangs in deciding upon a vindictive punishment; that he adopted this course as being virtually by its consequences the least sanguinary; and, finally, that if he erred, it was not through his heart, but by resisting its very strongest impulses.

It is remarkable that both Charlemagne and Bonaparte succeeded as by inheritance to one great element of their enormous power; each found, ready to his hands, that vast development of martial enthusiasm, upon which, as its first condition, their victorious career reposed. Each also found the great armory of resources opened, which such a spirit, diffused over so vast a territory, must in any age insure. Of Charle-

magne, in an age when as yet the use of infantry was but imperfectly known, it may be said symbolically, that he found the universal people, patrician and plebeian, chieftain and vassal, with the left foot * in the stirrup; of Napoleon, in an age when the use of artillery was first understood, that he found every man standing to his gun. Both in short found war *in procinctu*; both found the people whom they governed, willing to support the privations and sacrifices which war imposes; hungering and thirsting for its glories, its pomps and triumphs; entering even with lively sympathy of pleasure into its hardships and its trials; and thus, from within and from without, prepared for military purposes. So far both had the same good fortune; † neither had much merit. The enthusiasin

* Or perhaps the *right*, for the Prussian cavalry (who drew their custom from some regiments in the service of Gustavus Adolphus, and they again traditionally from others) are always trained to mount in this way.

† It is painful to any man of honorable feeling that, whilst a great rival nation is pursuing the ennobling profession of arms, his own should be reproached contemptuously with a sordid dedication to commerce. However, on the one hand, things are not always as they seem; commerce has its ennobling effects, direct or indirect, war its barbarizing degradations. And, on the other hand, the facts even are not exactly as *prima facie* they were supposed; for the truth is, that, in proportion to its total population, England had more men in arms during the last war than France. But, generally speaking, the case may be stated thus: the British nation is, by original constitution of mind, and by long enjoyment of liberty, a far nobler people than the French. And hence we see the reason and the necessity that the French should, with a view to something like a final balance in the effect, be trained to a nobler profession. Compensations

of Napoleon's days was the birth of republican sentiments, and built on a reaction of civic and patriotic ardor. In the very plenitude of their rage against kings, the French Republic were threatened with attack, and with the desolation of their capital by a banded crusade of kings; and they rose in frenzy to meet the aggressors. The Allied Powers had themselves kindled the popular excitement which provoked this vast development of martial power amongst the French, and first brought their own warlike strength within their own knowledge. In the days of Charlemagne the same martial character was the result of ancient habits and training, encouraged and effectually organized by the energy of the aspiring mayors of the palace, or great lieutenants of the Merovingian kings. But agreeing in this, that they were indebted to others for the martial spirit which they found, and that both turned to their account a power not created by themselves; Charlemagne and Napoleon differed, however in the utmost possible extent as to the final application of their borrowed advantages. Napoleon applied them to purposes the very opposite of those which had originally given them birth. Nothing less than patriotic ardor in defence of what had at one time appeared to be the cause of civil liberty, could have availed to evoke those mighty hosts which gathered in the early years of the Revolution on the German and Italian frontiers of France. Yet were these hosts applied, under the perfect despotism of Napoleon, to the final

are everywhere produced or encouraged by nature and by Providence, and a nobler discipline in the one nation is doubtless some equilibrium to a nobler nature in the other

extinction of liberty; and the armies of Jacobinism, who had gone forth on a mission of liberation for Europe, were at last employed in riveting the chains of their compatriots, and forging others for the greater part of Christendom. Far otherwise was the conduct of Charlemagne. The Frankish government, though we are not circumstantially acquainted with its forms, is known to have been tempered by a large infusion of popular influence. This is proved, as Mr. James observes, by the deposition of Chilperic; by the grand national assemblies of the Champ de Mars; and by other great historical facts. Now, the situation of Charlemagne, successor to a throne already firmly established, and in his own person a mighty amplifier of its glories, and a leader in whom the Franks had unlimited confidence, threw into his hands an unexampled power of modifying the popular restraints upon himself in any degree he might desire.

“ Nunquam libertas gratior exit,
Quam sub rege pio ” —

is the general doctrine. But as to the Franks in particular, if they resembled their modern representatives in their most conspicuous moral feature, it would be more true to say, that the bribe and the almost magical seduction for *them*, capable of charming away their sternest resolutions, and of relaxing the hand of the patriot when grasping his noblest birthright, has ever lain in great military success, in the power of bringing victory to the national standards, and in continued offerings on the altar of public vanity. In *their* estimate for above a thousand years, it has been found true that the harvest of a few splendid campaigns,

reaped upon the fields of neighboring nations, far outweighs any amount of humbler blessings in the shape of civil and political privileges. Charlemagne as a conqueror, and by far the greatest illustrator of the Frankish name, might easily have conciliated their gratitude and admiration into a surrender of popular rights; or, profiting by his high situation, and the confidence reposed in him, he might have undermined their props; or, by a direct exertion of his power, he might have peremptorily resumed them. Slowly and surely, or summarily and with violence, this great emperor had the national privileges in his power. But the beneficence of his purposes required no such aggression on the rights of his subjects. War brought with it naturally some extension of power; and a military jurisdiction is necessarily armed with some discretionary license. But in the civil exercise of his authority, the emperor was content with the powers awarded to him by law and custom. His great schemes of policy were all of a nature to prepare his subjects for a condition of larger political influence; he could not in consistency be adverse to an end towards which he so anxiously prepared the means. And it is certain that, although some German writers have attempted to fasten upon Charlemagne a charge of vexatious inquisition into the minor police of domestic life, and into petty details of economy below the majesty of his official character, even *their* vigilance of research, sharpened by malice, has been unable to detect throughout his long reign, and in the hurry of sudden exigencies natural to a state of uninterrupted warfare and alarm, one single act of tyranny, personal revenge, or viola-

tion of the existing laws. Charlemagne, like Napoleon, had bitter enemies, some who were such to his government and his public purposes ; some again to his person upon motives of private revenge. Tassilo, for example, the Duke of Bavaria, and Desiderius, the King of the Lombards, acted against him upon the bitterest instigations of feminine resentment ; each of these princes conceiving himself concerned in a family quarrel, pursued the cause which he had adopted in the most ferocious spirit of revenge, and would undoubtedly have inflicted death upon Charlemagne, had he fallen into their power. Of this he must himself have been sensible ; and yet, when the chance of war threw both of them into his power, he forbore to exercise even those rights of retaliation for their many provocations which the custom of that age sanctioned universally ; he neither mutilated nor deprived them of sight. Confinement to religious seclusion was all that he inflicted ; and in the case of Tassilo, where mercy could be more safely exercised, he pardoned him so often, that it became evident in what current his feelings ran, wherever the cruel necessities of the public service allowed him to indulge them.

In the conspiracy formed against him, upon the provocations offered to the Frankish nobility by his third wife, he showed the same spirit of excessive clemency, a clemency which again reminds us of the first Cæsar, and which was not merely parental, but often recalls to us the long-suffering and tenderness of spirit which belong to the infirmity of maternal affection. Here are no Palms, executed for no real offence known to the laws of his country, and without a trial such as

any laws in any country would have conceded. No innocent D'Enghiens murdered, without the shadow of provocation, and purely on account of his own rever- sionary rights; not for doing or meditating wrong, but because the claims which unfortunately he inher- ited might by possibility become available in his per- son; not, therefore, even as an enemy by intention or premeditation; not even as an apparent competitor, but in the rare character of a competitor presumptive one who might become an ideal competitor by the extinction of a whole family, and even then no sub- stantial competitor until after a revolution in France, which must already have undermined the throne of Bonaparte. To his own subjects, and his own kins- men, never did Charlemagne forget to be, in acts as well as words, a parent. In his foreign relations, it is true, for one single purpose of effectual warning, Charlemagne put forth a solitary trait of Roman harsh- ness. This is the case which we have already noticed and defended; and, with a view to the comparison with Napoleon, remarkable enough it is, that the num- bers sacrificed on this occasion are pretty nearly the same as on the celebrated massacre at Jaffa, perpe- trated by Napoleon in Council.* In the Saxon, as in the Syrian massacre, the numbers were between four and five thousand; not that the numbers or the scale

* "*In council*," we say purposely and in candor; for the only pleas in palliation ever set up by Napoleon's apologists, are these two, *necessity*, the devil's plea, in the first place; secondly, that the guilt of the transaction, whether more or less, was di- vided amongst the general and the several members of his council.

of the transaction can affect its principle, but it is well to know it, because then to its author, as now to us who sit as judges upon it, that circumstance cannot be supposed to have failed in drawing the very keenest attention to its previous consideration. A butchery, that was in a numerical sense so vast, cannot be supposed to have escaped its author in a hurry, or to be open to any of the usual palliations from precipitance or inattention. Charlemagne and Napoleon must equally be presumed to have regarded this act on all sides, to have weighed it in and for itself, and to have traversed by anticipation the whole sum of its consequences. In the one case we find a general, the leader of a *soi-disant* Christian army, the representative of the "most Christian" nation, and, as amongst infidels, specially charged with the duty of supporting the sanctity of Christian good faith, unfortunately pledged by his own most confidential and accredited agents, in a moment of weakness, to a promise which he the commander-in-chief regarded as ruinous. This promise, fatal to Napoleon's honor, and tarnishing for many a year to the Christian name, guaranteed "quarter" to a large body of Turkish troops, having arms in their hands, and otherwise well able to have made a desperate defence. Such a promise was peculiarly embarrassing; provisions ran short, and, to detain them as prisoners, would draw murmurs from his own troops, now suffering hardships themselves. On the other hand, to have turned them adrift would have insured their speedy reappearance as active enemies to a diminished and debilitated army; for, as to sending them off by sea, that measure was impracticable, as well

from want of shipping as from the presence of the English. Such was the dilemma, doubtless perplexing enough, but not more so than in ten thousand other cases, for which their own appropriate ten thousand remedies have been found. What was the issue? The entire body of gallant soldiers, disarmed upon the faith of a solemn guarantee from a Christian general, standing in the very steps of the noble (and the more noble, because bigoted) Crusaders, were all mowed down by the musketry of their thrice accursed enemy; and, by way of crowning treachery with treachery, some few who had swum off to a point of rock in the sea, were lured back to destruction under a second series of promises, violated almost at the very instant when uttered. A larger or more damnable murder does not stain the memory of any brigand, buccaneer, or pirate; nor has any army, Huns, Vandals, or Mogul Tartars, ever polluted itself by so base a perfidy; for, in this memorable tragedy, the whole army were accomplices. Now, as to Charlemagne, he had tried the effect of forgiveness and lenity often in vain. Clemency was misinterpreted; it had been, and it would be, construed into conscious weakness. Under these circumstances, with a view undoubtedly to the final extinction of rebellions which involved infinite bloodshed on both sides, he permitted one trial to be made of a severe and sanguinary chastisement. It failed; insurrections proceeded as before, and it was not repeated. But the main difference in the principle of the two cases is this, that Charlemagne had exacted no penalty but one, which the laws of war in that age conferred, and even in this age the laws of allegiance.

However bloody, therefore, this tragedy was no murder. It was a judicial punishment, built upon known acts and admitted laws, designed in mercy, consented to unwillingly, and finally repented. Lastly, instead of being one in a multitude of acts bearing the same character, it stood alone in a long career of intercourse with wild and ferocious nations, owning no control but that of the spear and sword.

Many are the points of comparison, and some of them remarkable enough, in the other circumstances of the two careers, separated by a thousand years. Both effected the passage of the Great St. Bernard ; * but the one in an age when mechanical forces, and the aids of art, were yet imperfectly developed ; the other in an age when science had armed the arts of war and of locomotion with the fabulous powers of the Titans, and with the whole resources of a mighty nation at his immediate disposal. Both, by means of this extraordinary feat, achieved the virtual conquest of Lombardy in an hour ; but Charlemagne, without once risking the original impression of this *coup-d'éclat* ; Napoleon, on the other hand, so entirely squandering and forfeiting his own success, that in the battle which followed he was at first utterly defeated, and but for the blunder of his enemy, and the sudden aid of an accomplished friend, irretrievably. Both suffered politically by the repudiation of a wife ; but Charlemagne, under

* And from the fact of that corps in Charlemagne's army, which effected the passage, having been commanded by his uncle, Duke Bernard, this mountain, previously known as the *Mons Jovis* (and, by corruption, *Mont le Joux*), very justly obtained the more modern name which it still retains.

adequate provocation, and with no final result of evil; Bonaparte under heavy aggravations of ingratitude and indiscretion. Each assumed the character of a patron to learning and learned men; but Napoleon, in an age when knowledge of every kind was self-patronized, when no possible exertions of power could avail to crush it, and yet, under these circumstances, with utter insincerity. Charlemagne, on the other hand, at a time when the countenance of a powerful protector made the whole difference between revival and a long extinction; and what was still more to the purpose of doing honor to his memory, not merely in a spirit of sincerity, but of fervid activity. Not content with drawing counsel and aid from the cells of Northumberland, even the short time which he passed at Rome, he had "collected a number of grammarians (that is, *littérateurs*) and arithmeticians, the poor remains of the orators and philosophers of the past, and engaged them to accompany him from Italy to France."

What resulted in each case from these great efforts and prodigious successes? Each failed in laying the foundations of any permanent inheritance to his own glory in his own family. But Bonaparte lived to lay in ruins even his personal interest in this great edifice of empire; and that entirely by his own desperate presumption, precipitance, and absolute defect of self-command. Charlemagne, on *his* part, lost nothing of what he had gained: if his posterity did not long maintain the elevation to which he had raised them, *that* did but the more proclaim the grandeur of the mind which had reared a colossal empire, that sank under any powers inferior to his own. If the empire

itself lost its unity, and divided into sections, even thus it did not lose the splendor and prosperity of its separate parts; and the praise remains entire — let succeeding princes, as conservators, have failed as much and as excusably as they might — that he erected the following splendid empire: — The whole of France and Belgium, with their natural boundaries of the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Ocean, the Mediterranean; to the south, Spain between the Ebro and the Pyrenees; and to the north, the whole of Germany, up to the banks of the Elbe. Italy, as far as the lower Calabria, was either governed by his son, or tributary to his crown; Dalmatia, Croatia, Liburnia, and Istria (with the exception of the maritime cities), were joined to the territories, which he had himself conquered, of Hungary and Bohemia. As far as the conflux of the Danube with the Teyss and the Save, the east of Europe acknowledged his power. Most of the Slavonian tribes, between the Elbe and the Vistula, paid tribute and professed obedience; and Corsica, Sardinia, with the Balearic Islands, were dependent upon his possessions in Italy and Spain.

His morals were yet greater than his territorial conquests: in the eloquent language of his present historian, “he snatched from darkness all the lands he conquered; and may be said to have added the whole of Germany to the world.” Wherever he moved, civilization followed his footsteps. What he conquered was emphatically the conquest of his own genius; and his vast empire was, in a peculiar sense, his own creation. And that which, under general circumstances would have exposed the hollowness and insufficiency

of his establishment, was for him, in particular, the seal and attestation of his extraordinary grandeur of mind. His empire dissolved after he had departed; his dominions lost their cohesion, and slipped away from the nerveless hands which succeeded; a sufficient evidence — were there no other — that all the vast resources of the Frankish throne, wielded by imbecile minds, were inadequate to maintain that which, in the hands of a Charlemagne, they had availed to conquer and cement.

JOAN OF ARC.³⁸

IN REFERENCE TO M. MICHELET'S HISTORY OF
FRANCE.

WHAT is to be thought of *her*? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that — like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa — rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good-will*, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendor and a noonday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her

native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent: no! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* truth, that never once — no, not for a moment of weakness — didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honor from man. Coronets for thee! O no! Honors, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood.³⁹ Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honor, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country, thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short: and the sleep which is in the grave is long! Let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long. This pure creature — pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious — never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not

in vision, perhaps, the aerial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there, until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints; — these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard for ever.

Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sat upon it: but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sat upon it, was for *her*; but, on the contrary, that she was for *them*; not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France, and for centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until, in another century, the wrath of God and man combined to wither them; but well Joanna knew, early at Domrémy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for *her*. Flower nor bud, bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for *her*.

But stay. What reason is there for taking up this subject of Joanna precisely in the spring of 1847? Might it not have been left till the spring of 1947; or, perhaps, left till called for? Yes, but it *is* called for; and clamorously. You are aware, reader, that amongst the many original thinkers whom modern France has produced, one of the reputed leaders is M. Michelet. All these writers are of a revolutionary cast; not in a political sense merely, but in all senses; mad, oftentimes, as March hares; crazy with the laughing gas of

recovered liberty; drunk with the wine-cup of their mighty revolution, snorting, whinnying, throwing up their heels, like wild horses in the boundless Pampas, and running races of defiance with snipes, or with the winds, or with their own shadows, if they can find nothing else to challenge. Some time or other I, that have leisure to read, may introduce *you*, that have not, to two or three dozen of these writers; of whom I can assure you beforehand, that they are often profound, and at intervals are even as impassioned as if they were come of our best English blood. But now, confining our attention to M. Michelet, we in England — who know him best by his worst book, the book against priests, &c. — know him disadvantageously. That book is a rhapsody of incoherence. But his ‘History of France’ is quite another thing. A man, in whatsoever craft he sails, cannot stretch away out of sight when he is linked to the windings of the shore by towing ropes of history. Facts, and the consequences of facts, draw the writer back to the falconer’s lure from the giddiest heights of speculation. Here, therefore — in his ‘France’ — if not always free from flightiness, if now and then off like a rocket for an airy wheel in the clouds, M. Michelet, with natural politeness, never forgets that he has left a large audience waiting for him on earth, and gazing upwards in anxiety for his return: return, therefore, he does. But history, though clear of certain temptations in one direction, has separate dangers of its own. It is impossible so to write a history of France, or of England — works becoming every hour more indispensable to the inevitably-political man of this day — without perilous openings for error. If I, for instance, on the part

of England, should happen to turn my labors in that channel, and (on the model of Lord Percy going to Chevy Chase)

‘ A vow to God should make
My pleasure in the Michelet woods
Three summer days to take,’

probably, from simple delirium, I might hunt M. Michelet into *delirium tremens*. Two strong angels stand by the side of history, whether French history or English, as heraldic supporters: the angel of research on the left hand, that must read millions of dusty parchments, and of pages blotted with lies; the angel of meditation on the right hand, that must cleanse these lying records with fire, even as of old the draperies of *asbestos* were cleansed, and must quicken them into regenerated life. Willingly I acknowledge that no man will ever avoid innumerable errors of detail; with so vast a compass of ground to traverse, this is impossible; but such errors (though I have a bushel on hand, at M. Michelet's service) are not the game I chase; it is the bitter and unfair spirit in which M. Michelet writes against England. Even *that*, after all is but my secondary object; the real one is Joanna, the Pucelle d'Orleans for herself.

I am not going to write the History of *La Pucelle*: to do this, or even circumstantially to report the history of her persecution and bitter death, of her struggle with false witnesses and with ensnaring judges, it would be necessary to have before us *all* the documents, and therefore the collection only⁴⁰ now forthcoming in Paris. But *my* purpose is narrower. There have been great thinkers, disdaining the careless judgment of contemporaries, who have thrown themselves

boldly on the judgment of a far posterity, that should have had time to review, to ponder, to compare. There have been great actors on the stage of tragic humanity that might with the same depth of confidence, have appealed from the levity of compatriot friends — too heartless for the sublime interest of their story, and too impatient for the labor of sifting its perplexities — to the magnanimity and justice of enemies. To this class belongs the Maid of Arc. The ancient Romans were too faithful to the ideal of grandeur in themselves not to relent, after a generation or two, before the grandeur of Hannibal. Mithridates — a more doubtful person — yet merely for the magic perseverance of his indomitable malice, won from the same Romans the only real honor that ever he received on earth. And we English have ever shown the same homage to stubborn enmity. To work unflinchingly for the ruin of England; to say through life, by word and by deed, *Delenda est Anglia Victrix!* that one purpose of malice, faithfully pursued, has quartered some people upon our national funds of homage as by a perpetual annuity. Better than an inheritance of service rendered to England herself, has sometimes proved the most insane hatred to England. Hyder Ali, even his son Tippoo, though so far inferior, and Napoleon, have all benefited by this disposition amongst ourselves to exaggerate the merit of diabolic enmity. Not one of these men was ever capable, in a solitary instance, of praising an enemy [what do you say to *that*, reader?], and yet in *their* behalf, we consent to forget, not their crimes only, but (which is worse) their hideous bigotry and anti-magnanimous egotism, for nationality it was not. Suffrein, and some half dozen of other French

nautical heroes, because rightly they did us all the mischief they could (which was really great), are names justly revered in England. On the same principle, La Pucelle d'Orleans, the victorious enemy of England, has been destined to receive her deepest commemoration from the magnanimous justice of Englishmen.

Joanna, as we in England should call her, but, according to her own statement, Jeanne (or, as M. Michelet asserts, Jean⁴¹) D'Arc, was born at Domrémy, a village on the marches of Lorraine and Champagne, and dependent upon the town of Vaucouleurs. I have called her a Lorrainer, not simply because the word is prettier, but because Champagne too odiously reminds us English of what are for *us* imaginary wines, which, undoubtedly, *La Pucelle* tasted as rarely as we English; we English, because the Champagne of London is chiefly grown in Devonshire; *La Pucelle*, because the Champagne of Champagne never, by any chance, flowed into the fountain of Domrémy, from which only she drank. M. Michelet will have her to be a *Champenoise*, and for no better reason than that she 'took after her father,' who happened to be a *Champenois*.

These disputes, however, turn on refinements too nice. Domrémy stood upon the frontiers, and, like other frontiers, produced a *mixed* race representing the *cis* and the *trans*. A river (it is true) formed the boundary-line at this point—the river Meuse; and *that*, in old days, might have divided the populations; but in these days it did not: there were bridges, there were ferries, and weddings crossed from the right bank to the left. Here lay two great roads, not so much for travellers that were few, as for armies that were

too many by half. These two roads, one of which was the great high road between France and Germany, *decussated* at this very point; which is a learned way of saying, that they formed a St. Andrew's cross, or letter X. I hope the compositor will choose a good large X, in which case the point of intersection, the *locus* of conflux and intersection for these four diverging arms, will finish the reader's geographical education, by showing him to a hair's-breadth where it was that Domrémy stood. Those roads, so grandly situated, as great trunk arteries between two mighty realms,⁴² and haunted for ever by wars, or rumors of wars, decussated (for anything I know to the contrary) absolutely under Joanna's bedroom window; one rolling away to the right, past Monsieur D'Arc's old barn, and the other unaccountably preferring to sweep round that odious man's pigsty to the left.

On whichever side of the border chance had thrown Joanna, the same love to France would have been nurtured. For it is a strange fact, noticed by M. Michelet and others, that the Dukes of Bar and Lorraine had for generations pursued the policy of eternal warfare with France on their own account, yet also of eternal amity and league with France, in case anybody else presumed to attack her. Let peace settle upon France, and before long you might rely upon seeing the little vixen Lorraine flying at the throat of France. Let France be assailed by a formidable enemy, and instantly you saw a Duke of Lorraine insisting on having his own throat cut in support of France; which favor accordingly was cheerfully granted to him in three great successive battles — twice by the English, viz., at Crécy and Agincourt, once by the Sultan at Nicopolis.

This sympathy with France during great eclipses, in those that during ordinary seasons were always teasing her with brawls and guerilla inroads, strengthened the natural piety to France of those that were confessedly the children of her own house. The outposts of France, as one may call the great frontier provinces, were of all localities the most devoted to the Fleurs de Lys. To witness, at any great crisis, the generous devotion to these lilies of the little fiery cousin that in gentler weather was for ever tilting at the breast of France, could not but fan the zeal of France's legitimate daughters: whilst to occupy a post of honor on the frontiers against an old hereditary enemy of France, would naturally stimulate this zeal by a sentiment of martial pride, by a sense of danger always threatening, and of hatred always smouldering. That great four-headed road was a perpetual memento to patriotic ardor. To say, this way lies the road to Paris, and that other way to Aix-la-Chapelle — this to Prague, that to Vienna — nourished the warfare of the heart by daily ministrations of sense. The eye that watched for the gleams of lance or helmet from the hostile frontier, the ear that listened for the groaning of wheels, made the high road itself, with its relations to centres so remote, into a manual of patriotic duty.

The situation, therefore, *locally*, of Joanna was full of profound suggestions to a heart that listened for the stealthy steps of change and fear that too surely were in motion. But, if the place were grand, the time, the burden of the time, was far more so. The air overhead in its upper chambers was *hurtling* with the obscure sound; was dark with sullen fermenting of storms that had been gathering for a hundred and

thirty years. The battle of Agincourt in Joanna's childhood had re-opened the wounds of France. Crécy and Poitiers, those withering overthrows for the chivalry of France, had, before Agincourt occurred, been tranquillized by more than half a century; but his resurrection of their trumpet wails made the whole series of battles and endless skirmishes take their stations as parts in one drama. The graves that had closed sixty years ago, seemed to fly open in sympathy with a sorrow that echoed their own. The monarchy of France labored in extremity, rocked and reeled like a ship fighting with the darkness of monsoons. The madness of the poor king (Charles VI.) falling in at such a crisis, like the case of women laboring in childbirth during the storming of a city, trebled the awfulness of the time. Even the wild story of the incident which had immediately occasioned the explosion of this madness—the case of a man unknown, gloomy, and perhaps maniacal himself, coming out of a forest at noonday, laying his hand upon the bridle of the king's horse, checking him for a moment to say, 'Oh, king, thou art betrayed,' and then vanishing, no man knew whither, as he had appeared for no man knew what—fell in with the universal prostration of mind that laid France on her knees, as before the slow unweaving of some ancient prophetic doom. The famines, the extraordinary diseases, the insurrections of the peasantry up and down Europe—these were chords struck from the same mysterious harp; but these were transitory choruses. There have been others of deeper and more ominous sound. The termination of the Crusades, the destruction of the Templars, the Papal interdicts, the tragedies

caused or suffered by the house of Anjou, and by the emperor — these were full of a more permanent significance. But, since then, the colossal figure of feudalism was seen standing, as it were, on tiptoe, at Crécy, for flight from earth: that was a revolution unparalleled; yet *that* was a trifle, by comparison with the more fearful revolutions that were mining below the church. By her own internal schisms, by the abominable spectacle of a double pope — so that no man, except through political bias, could even guess which was Heaven's vicegerent, and which the creature of hell — the church was rehearsing, as in still earlier forms she had already rehearsed, those vast rents in her foundations which no man should ever heal.

These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies, that to the scientific gazer first caught the coiors of the *new* morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike of sweeping glooms overhead, dwelt upon all meditative minds, even upon those that could not distinguish the tendencies nor decipher the forms. It was, therefore, not her own age alone, as affected by its immediate calamities, that lay with such weight upon Joanna's mind; but her own age, as one section in a vast mysterious drama, unweaving through a century back, and drawing nearer continually to some dreadful crisis. Cataracts and rapids were heard roaring ahead; and signs were seen far back, by help of old men's memories, which answered secretly to signs now coming forward on the eye, even as locks answer to keys. It was not wonderful that in such a haunted solitude, with such a haunted heart, Joanna should see angelic visions, and hear angelic voices. These voices whispered to her for ever the duty, self

imposed, of delivering France. Five years she listened to these monitory voices with internal struggles. At length she could resist no longer. Doubt gave way; and she left her home for ever in order to present herself at the dauphin's court.

The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard: was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard: and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. She read nothing, for she could not read; but she had heard others read parts of the Roman martyrology. She wept in sympathy with the sad *Misereres* of the Romish church; she rose to heaven with the glad triumphant *Te Deums* of Rome: she drew her comfort and her vital strength from the rites of the same church. But, next after these spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies, that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a-year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds. Fairies are important, even in a statistical view: certain weeds mark poverty in the soil, fairies mark its solitude. As surely as the wolf retires before cities, does the fairy sequester herself from the haunts of the licensed victualler. A village is too much for her nervous delicacy: at most, she can tolerate a distant view of a hamlet. We may judge, therefore, by the uneasiness and extra trouble which they gave to the parson, in what strength the fairies mustered at Domrémy; and, by a satisfactory consequence, how thinly sown with men and women must have been that region even in its unhaunted spots. But the forests of Domrémy — those

were the glories of the land: for in them abode mysterious power and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. 'Abbeys there were, and abbey windows,' — 'like Moorish temples of the Hindoos,' that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness. This sort of religious talisman being secured, a man the most afraid of ghosts (like myself, suppose, or the reader) becomes armed into courage to wander for days in their sylvan recesses. The mountains of the Vosges, on the eastern frontier of France, have never attracted much notice from Europe, except in 1813-14 for a few brief months, when they fell within Napoleon's line of defence against the Allies. But they are interesting for this, amongst other features, that they do not, like some loftier ranges, repel woods: the forests and the hills are on sociable terms. *Live and let live*, is their motto. For this reason, in part, these tracts in Lorraine were a favorite hunting-ground with the Carolingian princes. About six hundred years before Joanna's childhood, Charlemagne was known to have hunted there. That, of itself, was a grand incident in the traditions of a forest or a chase. In these vast forests, also, were to be found (if anywhere to be found) those mysterious fawns that tempted solitary hunters into visionary and perilous pursuits. Here

was seen (if anywhere seen) that ancient stag who was already nine hundred years old, but possibly a hundred or two more, when met by Charlemagne; and the thing was put beyond doubt by the inscription upon his golden collar. I believe Charlemagne knighted the stag; and, if ever he is met again by a king, he ought to be made an earl — or, being upon the marches of France, a marquis. Observe, I don't absolutely vouch for all these things: my own opinion varies. On a fine breezy forenoon I am audaciously sceptical; but, as twilight sets in, my credulity grows steadily, till it becomes equal to anything that could be desired. And I have heard candid sportsmen declare that, outside of these very forests, they laughed loudly at all the dim tales connected with their haunted solitudes; but, on reaching a spot notoriously eighteen miles deep within them, they agreed with Sir Roger de Coverley, that a good deal might be said on both sides.

Such traditions, or any others that (like the stag) connect distant generations with each other, are, for that cause, sublime; and the sense of the shadowy, connected with such appearances that reveal themselves or not according to circumstances, leaves a coloring of sanctity over ancient forests, even in those minds that utterly reject the legend as a fact.

But, apart from all distinct stories of that order, in any solitary frontier between two great empires, as here, for instance, or in the desert between Syria and the Euphrates, there is an inevitable tendency in minds of any deep sensibility, to people the solitudes with phantom images of powers that were of old so vast. Joanna, therefore, in her quiet occupation of a shepherdess, would be led continually to brood over

the political condition of her country, by the traditions of the past no less than by the mementoes of the local present.

M. Michelet, indeed, says that La Pucelle was *not* a shepherdess. I beg his pardon: she *was*. What he rests upon, I guess pretty well: it is the evidence of a woman called Haumette, the most confidential friend of Joanna. Now, she is a good witness, and a good girl, and I like her; for she makes a natural and affectionate report of Joanna's ordinary life. But still, however good she may be as a witness, Joanna is better; and she, when speaking to the dauphin, calls herself in the Latin report *Bergereta*. Even Haumette confesses, that Joanna tended sheep in her girlhood. And I believe, that if Miss Haumette were taking coffee alone with me this very evening (February 12, 1847) — in which there would be no subject for scandal for or maiden blushes, because I am an intense philosopher, and Miss H. would be hard upon four hundred and fifty years old — she would admit the following comment upon her evidence to be right. A Frenchman, about forty years ago, M. Simond, in his 'Travels,' mentions incidently the following hideous scene as one steadily observed and watched by himself in chivalrous France, not very long before the French Revolution: — A peasant was ploughing; the team that drew his plough was a donkey and a woman. Both were regularly harnessed: both pulled alike. This is bad enough; but the Frenchman adds, that, in distributing his lashes, the peasant was obviously desirous of being impartial; or, if either of the yoke-fellows had a right to complain, certainly it was not the donkey. Now, in any country where such degradation of fe-

males could be tolerated by the state of manners, a woman of delicacy would shrink from acknowledging, either for herself or her friend, that she had ever been addicted to any mode of labor not strictly domestic ; because, if once owning herself a prædial servant, she would be sensible that this confession extended by probability in the hearer's thoughts to the having incurred indignities of this horrible kind. Haumette clearly thinks it more dignified for Joanna to have been darning the stockings of her horny-hoofed father, Monsieur D'Arc, than keeping sheep, lest she might then be suspected of having ever done something worse. But, luckily, there was no danger of *that* : Joanna never was in service ; and my opinion is, that her father should have mended his own stockings, since probably he was the party to make holes in them, as many a better man than D'Arc does ; meaning by *that* not myself, because, though probably a better man than D'Arc, I protest against doing anything of the kind. If I lived even with Friday in Juan Fernandez, either Friday must do all the darning, or else it must go undone. The better men that I meant were the sailors in the British navy, every man of whom mends his own stockings. Who else is to do it ? Do you suppose, reader, that the junior lords of the admiralty are under articles to darn for the navy ?

The reason, meantime, for my systematic hatred of D'Arc is this. There was a story current in France before the Revolution, framed to ridicule the pauper aristocracy, who happened to have long pedigrees and short rent rolls, viz., that a head of such a house, dating from the Crusades, was overheard saying to his son, a Chevalier of St. Louis, '*Chevalier, as-tu donné au*

cochon à manger ! Now, it is clearly made out by the surviving evidence, that D'Arc would much have preferred continuing to say, '*Ma fille as-tu donné au cochon à manger !*' to saying, '*Pucelle d'Orleans, as-tu sauré los fleurs-de-lys !*' There is an old English copy of verses which argues thus : —

' If the man that turnips cries,
Cry not when his father dies —
Then 'tis plain the man had rather —
Have a turnip than his father.'

I cannot say that the logic in these verses was *ever entirely* to my satisfaction. I do not see my way through it as clearly as could be wished. But I see my way most clearly through D'Arc ; and the result is — that he would greatly have preferred not merely a turnip to his father, but saving a pound or so of bacon to saving the Oriflamme of France.

It is probable (as M. Michelet suggests) that the title of Virgin, or *Pucelle*, had in itself, and apart from the miraculous stories about her, a secret power over the rude soldiery and partisan chiefs of that period ; for, in such a person, they saw a representative manifestation of the Virgin Mary, who in a course of centuries, had grown steadily upon the popular heart.

As to Joanna's supernatural detection of the dauphin (Charles VII.) amongst three hundred lords and knights, I am surprised at the credulity which could ever lend itself to that theatrical jugglc. Who admires more than myself the sublime enthusiasm, the rapturous faith in herself, of this pure creature ? But I am far from admiring stage artifices, which not *La Pucelle*, but the court, must have arranged ; nor can

surrender myself to the conjurer's *legerdemain*, such as may be seen every day for a shilling. Southey's 'Joan of Arc' was published in 1796. Twenty years after, talking with Southey, I was surprised to find him still owning a secret bias in favor of Joan, founded on her detection of the dauphin. The story, for the benefit of the reader new to the case, was this: — *La Pucelle* was first made known to the dauphin, and presented to his court, at Chinon: and here came her first trial. By way of testing her supernatural pretensions, she was to find out the royal personage amongst the whole ark of clean and unclean creatures. Failing in this *coup d'essai*, she would not simply disappoint many a beating heart in the glittering crowd that on different motives yearned for her success, but she would ruin herself — and, as the oracle within had told her, would, by ruining herself, ruin France. Our own sovereign lady Victoria rehearses annually a trial not so severe in degree, but the same in kind. She 'pricks' for sheriffs. Joanna pricked for a king. But observe the difference: our own lady pricks for two men out of three; Joanna for one man out of three hundred. Happy Lady of the islands and the orient! — she *can* go astray in her choice only by one half; to the extent of one half she *must* have the satisfaction of being right. And yet, even with these tight limits to the misery of a boundless discretion, permit me, liege Lady, with all loyalty, to submit — that now and then you prick with your pin the wrong man. But the poor child from Domrémy, shrinking under the gaze of a dazzling court — not *because* dazzling (for in visions she had seen those that were more so), but *because* some of them wore a scoffing smile on their

features — how should *she* throw her line into so deep a river to angle for a king, where many a gay creature was sporting that masqueraded as kings in dress? Nay, even more than any true king would have done: for, in Southey's version of the story, the dauphin says, by way of trying the virgin's magnetic sympathy with royalty,

‘ On the throne,
I the while mingling with the menial throng,
Some courtier shall be seated.’

This usurper is even crowned: ‘the jewelled crown shines on a menial's head.’ But, really, that is ‘*un peu fort*’; and the mob of spectators might raise a scruple whether our friend the jackdaw upon the throne, and the dauphin himself, were not grazing the shins of treason. For the dauphin could not lend more than belonged to him. According to the popular notion, he had no crown for himself; consequently none to lend, on any pretence whatever, until the consecrated Maid should take him to Rheims. This was the *popular* notion in France. But, certainly, it was the dauphin's interest to support the popular notion, as he meant to use the services of Joanna. For, if he were king already, what was it that she could do for him beyond Orleans? That is to say, what more than a mere *military* service could she render him? And, above all, if he were king without a coronation, and without the oil from the sacred ampulla, what advantage was yet open to him by celerity above his competitor the English boy? Now was to be a race for a coronation: he that should win *that* race, carried the superstition of France along with him: he that should

first be drawn from the ovens of Rheims, was under that superstition baked into a king.

La Pucelle, before she could be allowed to practise as a warrior, was put through her manual and platoon exercise, as a pupil in divinity, at the bar of six eminent men in wigs. According to Southey (v. 393, Book III., in the original edition of his 'Joan of Arc'), she 'appalled the doctors.' It's not easy to do *that*: but they had some reason to feel bothered, as that surgeon would assuredly feel bothered, who, upon proceeding to dissect a subject, should find the subject retaliating as a dissector upon himself, especially if Joanna ever made the speech to them which occupies v. 354-391, B. III. It is a double impossibility: 1st, because a piracy from Tindal's 'Christianity as old as the Creation'—a piracy *à parte ante*, and by three centuries; 2dly, it is quite contrary to the evidence on Joanna's trial. Southey's 'Joan,' of A. D. 1796 (Cottle, Bristol), tells the doctors, amongst other secrets, that she never in her life attended—1st, Mass; nor 2d, the Sacramental table; nor 3d, Confession. In the meantime, all this deistical confession of Joanna's, besides being suicidal for the interest of her cause, is opposed to the depositions upon *both* trials. The very best witness called from first to last, deposes that Joanna attended these rites of her church even too often; was taxed with doing so; and, by blushing, owned the charge as a fact, though certainly not as a fault. Joanna was a girl of natural piety, that saw God in forests, and hills, and fountains; but did not the less seek him in chapels and consecrated oratories.

This peasant girl was self-educated through her own natural meditateness. If the reader turns to that

divine passage in 'Paradise Regained,' which Milton has put into the mouth of our Saviour when first entering the wilderness, and musing upon the tendency of those great impulses growing within himself —

‘ Oh, what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared!
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end ’ —

he will have some notion of the vast reveries which brooded over the heart of Joanna in early girlhood, when the wings were budding that should carry her from Orleans to Rheims; when the golden chariot was dimly revealing itself, that should carry her from the kingdom of *France Delivered* to the eternal kingdom.

It is not requisite, for the honor of Joanna, nor is there, in this place, room to pursue her brief career of *action*. That, though wonderful, forms the earthly part of her story: the spiritual part is the saintly passion of her imprisonment, trial, and execution. It is unfortunate, therefore, for Southey's 'Joan of Arc' (which, however, should always be regarded as a *juvenile* effort), that, precisely when her real glory begins, the poem ends. But this limitation of the interest grew, no doubt, from the constraint inseparably attached to the law of epic unity. Joanna's history bisects into two opposite hemispheres, and both could not have been presented to the eye in one poem, unless by sacrificing all unity of theme, or else by involv

mg the earlier half, as a narrative episode, in the latter; which, however, might have been done, for it might have been communicated to a fellow-prisoner, or a confessor, by Joanna herself: It is sufficient, as concerns *this* section of Joanna's life, to say that she fulfilled, to the height of her promises, the restoration of the prostrate throne. France had become a province of England: and for the ruin of both, if such a yoke could be maintained. Dreadful pecuniary exhaustion caused the English energy to droop; and that critical opening *La Pucelle* used with a corresponding felicity of audacity and suddenness (that were in themselves portentous) for introducing the wedge of French native resources, for rekindling the national pride, and for planting the dauphin once more upon his feet. When Joanna appeared, he had been on the point of giving up the struggle with the English, distressed as they were, and of flying to the south of France. She taught him to blush for such abject counsels. She liberated Orleans, that great city, so decisive by its fate for the issue of the war, and then beleagured by the English with an elaborate application of engineering skill unprecedented in Europe. Entering the city after sunset, on the 29th of April, she sang mass on Sunday, May 8, for the entire disappearance of the besieging force. On the 29th of June, she fought and gained over the English the decisive battle of Patay; on the 9th of July, she took Troyes by a coup-de-main from a mixed garrison of English and Burgundians; on the 15th of that month, she carried the dauphin into Rheims; on Sunday the 17th, she crowned him; and there she rested from her labor of triumph. All that was to be *done*,

she had now accomplished: what remained was — to *suffer*.

All this forward movement was her own: excepting one man, the whole council was against her. Her enemies were all that drew power from earth. Her supporters were her own strong enthusiasm, and the headlong contagion by which she carried this sublime frenzy into the hearts of women, of soldiers, and of all who lived by labor. Henceforwards she was thwarted; and the worst error that she committed was, to lend the sanction of her presence to counsels which she had ceased to approve. But she had now accomplished the capital objects which her own visions had dictated. These involved all the rest. Errors were now less important; and doubtless it had now become more difficult for herself to pronounce authentically what *were* errors. The noble girl had achieved, as by a rapture of motion, the capital end of clearing out a free space around her sovereign, giving him the power to move his arms with effect; and, secondly, the inappreciable end of winning for that sovereign what seemed to all France the heavenly ratification of his rights, by crowning him with the ancient solemnities. She had made it impossible for the English now to step before her. They were caught in an irretrievable blunder, owing partly to discord amongst the uncles of Henry VI., partly to a want of funds, but partly to the very impossibility which they believed to press with tenfold force upon any French attempt to forestall theirs. They laughed at such a thought; and whilst they laughed, she *did* it. Henceforth the single redress for the English of this capital oversight, but which never *could* have redressed it effectually, was, to vitiate

and taint the coronation of Charles VII. as the work of a witch. That policy, and not malice (as M. Michelet is so happy to believe), was the moving principle in the subsequent prosecution of Joanna. Unless they unhinged the force of the first coronation in the popular mind, by associating it with power given from hell, they felt that the sceptre of the invader was broken.

But she, the child that, at nineteen, had wrought wonders so great for France, was she not elated? Did she not lose, as men so often *have* lost, all sobriety of mind when standing upon the pinnacle of success so giddy? Let her enemies declare. During the progress of her movement, and in the centre of ferocious struggles, she had manifested the temper of her feelings, by the pity which she had everywhere expressed for the suffering enemy. She forwarded to the English leaders a touching invitation to unite with the French, as brothers, in a common crusade against infidels, thus opening the road for a soldierly retreat. She interposed to protect the captive or the wounded—she mourned over the excesses of her countrymen—she threw herself off her horse to kneel by the dying English soldier, and to comfort him with such ministrations, physical or spiritual, as his situation allowed. ‘*Nolebat,*’ says the evidence, ‘*uti ense suo, aut quemquam interficere.*’ She sheltered the English, that invoked her aid, in her own quarters. She wept as she beheld, stretched on the field of battle, so many brave enemies that had died without confession. And, as regarded herself, her elation expressed itself thus:—On the day when she had finished her work, she wept; for she knew that, when her *triumphal* task was

done, her end must be approaching. Her aspirations pointed only to a place, which seemed to her more than usually full of natural piety, as one in which it would give her pleasure to die. And she uttered, between smiles and tears, as a wish that inexpressibly fascinated her heart, and yet was half-fantastic, a broken prayer, that God would return her to the solitudes from which he had drawn her, and suffer her to become a shepherdess once more. It was a natural prayer, because nature has laid a necessity upon every human heart to seek for rest, and to shrink from torment. Yet, again, it was a half-fantastic prayer, because, from childhood upwards, visions that she had no power to mistrust, and the voices which sounded in her ear for ever, had long since persuaded her mind, that for *her* no such prayer could be granted. Too well she felt that her mission must be worked out to the end, and that the end was now at hand. All went wrong from this time. She herself had created the *funds* out of which the French restoration should grow; but she was not suffered to witness their development, or their prosperous application. More than one military plan was entered upon which she did not approve. But she still continued to expose her person as before. Severe wounds had not taught her caution. And at length, in a sortie from Compeigne (whether through treacherous collusion on the part of her own friends is doubtful to this day), she was made prisoner by the Burgundians, and finally surrendered to the English.

Now came her trial. This trial, moving of course under English influence, was conducted in chief by the Bishop of Beauvais. He was a Frenchman, sold to

English interests, and hoping, by favor of the English leaders, to reach the highest preferment. *Bishop that art, Archbishop that shalt be, Cardinal that mayest be*, were the words that sounded continually in his ear; and doubtless, a whisper of visions still higher, of a triple crown, and feet upon the necks of kings, sometimes stole into his heart. M. Michelet is anxious to keep us in mind that this bishop was but an agent of the English. True. But it does not better the case for his countryman — that, being an accomplice in the crime, making himself the leader in the persecution against the helpless girl, he was willing to be all this in the spirit, and with the conscious vileness of a cat's-paw. Never from the foundations of the earth was there such a trial as this, if it were laid open in all its beauty of defence, and all its hellishness of attack. Oh, child of France! shepherdess, peasant girl! trodden under foot by all around thee, how I honor thy flashing intellect, quick as God's lightning, and true as God's lightning to its mark, that ran before France and laggard Europe by many a century, confounding the malice of the ensnarer, and making dumb the oracles of falsehood! Is it not scandalous, is it not humiliating to civilization, that, even at this day, France exhibits the horrid spectacle of judges examining the prisoner against himself; seducing him, by fraud, into treacherous conclusions against his own head; using the terrors of their power for extorting confessions from the frailty of hope; nay (which is worse), using the blandishments of condescension and snaky kindness for thawing into compliances of gratitude those whom they had failed to freeze into terror? Wicked judges! Barbarian juris-

prudence! that, sitting in your own conceit on the summits of social wisdom, have yet failed to learn the first principles of criminal justice; sit ye humbly and with docility at the feet of this girl from Domrémy, that tore your webs of cruelty into shreds and dust. 'Would you examine me as a witness against myself?' was the question by which many times she defied their arts. Continually she showed that their interrogations were irrelevant to any business before the court, or that entered into the ridiculous charges against her. General questions were proposed to her on points of casuistical divinity; two-edged questions, which not one of themselves could have answered without, on the one side, landing himself in heresy (as then interpreted), or, on the other, in some presumptuous expression of self-esteem. Next came a wretched Dominican, that pressed her with an objection, which, if applied to the Bible would tax every one of its miracles with unsoundness. The monk had the excuse of never having read the Bible. M. Michelet has no such excuse; and it makes one blush for him, as a philosopher, to find him describing such an argument as 'weighty,' whereas it is but a varied expression of rude Mahometan metaphysics. Her answer to this, if there were room to place the whole in a clear light, was as shattering as it was rapid. Another thought to entrap her by asking what language the angelic visitors of her solitude had talked; as though heavenly counsels could want polyglot interpreters for every word, or that God needed language at all in whispering thoughts to a human heart. Then came a worse devil, who asked her whether the archangel Michael had appeared naked. Not comprehending the vile insinua-

tion, Joanna, whose poverty suggested to her simplicity that it might be the *costliness* of suitable robes which caused the demur, asked them if they fancied God, who clothed the flowers of the valleys, unable to find raiment for his servants. The answer of Joanna moves a smile of tenderness, but the disappointment of her judges makes one laugh exultingly. Others succeeded by troops, who upbraided her with leaving her father; as if that greater Father, whom she believed herself to have been serving, did not retain the power of dispensing with his own rules, or had not said, that, for a less cause than martyrdom, man and woman should leave both father and mother.

On Easter Sunday, when the trial had been long proceeding, the poor girl fell so ill as to cause a belief that she had been poisoned. It was not poison. Nobody had any interest in hastening a death so certain. M. Michelet, whose sympathies with all feelings are so quick, that one would gladly see them always as justly directed, reads the case most truly. Joanna had a twofold malady. She was visited by a paroxysm of the complaint called *home-sickness*; the cruel nature of her imprisonment, and its length, could not but point her solitary thoughts, in darkness and in chains (for chained she was), to Domrémy. And the season, which was the most heavenly period of the spring, added stings to this yearning. That was one of her maladies — *nostalgia*, as medicine calls it; the other was weariness and exhaustion from daily combats with malice. She saw that everybody hated her, and thirsted for her blood; nay, many kind-hearted creatures that would have pitied her profoundly, as regarded all political charges, had their natural feelings

warped by the belief that she had dealings with fiendish powers. She knew she was to die; that was *not* the misery: the misery was, that this consummation could not be reached without so much intermediate strife, as if she were contending for some chance (where chance was none) of happiness, or were dreaming for a moment of escaping the inevitable. Why, then, *did* she contend? Knowing that she would reap nothing from answering her persecutors, why did she not retire by silence from the superfluous contest? It was because her quick and eager loyalty to truth would not suffer her to see it darkened by frauds, which *she* could expose, but others, even of candid listeners, perhaps could not; it was through that imperishable grandeur of soul, which taught her to submit meekly and without a struggle to her punishment, but taught her *not* to submit — no, not for a moment — to calumny as to facts, or to misconstruction as to motives. Besides, there were secretaries all around the court taking down her words. That was meant for no good to *her*. But the end does not always correspond to the meaning. And Joanna might say to herself — these words that will be used against me to-morrow and the next day, perhaps in some nobler generation may rise again for my justification. Yes, Joanna, they *are* rising even now in Paris, and for more than justification.

Woman, sister — there are some things which you do not execute as well as your brother, man; no, nor ever will. Pardon me, if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great poet from your choirs, or a Mozart, or a Phidias, or a Michael Angelo, or a great philosopher, or a great scholar. By which last is meant — not one who depends simply on an infinite

memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life. If you *can* create yourselves into any of these great creators, why have you not?

Yet, sister woman, though I cannot consent to find a Mozart or a Michael Angelo in your sex, cheerfully, and with the love that burns in depths of admiration, I acknowledge that you can do one thing as well as the best of us men — a greater thing than even Milton is known to have done, or Michael Angelo — you can die grandly, and as goddesses would die, were goddesses mortal. If any distant worlds (which *may* be the case) are so far ahead of us Tellurians in optical resources, as to see distinctly through their telescopes all that we do on earth, what is the grandest sight to which we ever treat them? St. Peter's at Rome, do you fancy, on Easter Sunday, or Luxor, or perhaps the Himalayas? Oh, no! my friend: suggest something better; these are baubles to *them*; they see in other worlds, in their own, far better toys of the same kind. These, take my word for it, are nothing. Do you give it up? The finest thing, then, we have to show them, is a scaffold on the morning of execution. I assure you there is a strong muster in those far telescopic worlds, on any such morning, of those who happen to find themselves occupying the right hemisphere for a peep at *us*. How, then, if it be announced in some such telescopic world by those who make a livelihood of catching glimpses at our newspapers, whose language they have long since deciphered, that the poor victim in the morning's sacrifice is a woman? How,

if it be published in that distant world, that the sufferer wears upon her head, in the eyes of many, the garlands of martyrdom? How, if it should be some Marie Antoinette, the widowed queen, coming forward on the scaffold, and presenting to the morning air her head turned gray by sorrow, daughter of Cæsars kneeling down humbly to kiss the guillotine, as one that worships death? How, if it were the noble Charlotta Corday, that in the bloom of youth, that with the loveliest of persons, that with homage waiting upon her smiles wherever she turned her face to scatter them — homage that followed those smiles as surely as the carols of birds, after showers in spring, follow the re-appearing sun and the racing of sunbeams over the hills — yet thought all these things cheaper than the dust upon her sandals, in comparison of deliverance from hell for her dear suffering France! Ah! these were spectacles indeed for those sympathizing people in distant worlds; and some, perhaps would suffer a sort of martyrdom themselves, because they could not testify their wrath, could not bear witness to the strength of love and to the fury of hatred that burned within them at such scenes; could not gather into golden urns some of that glorious dust which rested in the catacombs of earth.

On the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday in 1431, being then about nineteen years of age, the Maid of Arc underwent her martyrdom. She was conducted before mid-day, guarded by eight hundred spearmen, to a platform of prodigious height, constructed of wooden billets supported by occasional walls of lath and plaster, and traversed by hollow spaces in every direction for the creation of air-currents. The pile

struck terror,' says M. Michelet, 'by its height;' and, as usual, the English purpose in this is viewed as one of pure malignity. But there are two ways of explaining all that. It is probable that the purpose was merciful. On the circumstances of the execution I shall not linger. Yet, to mark the almost fatal felicity of M. Michelet in finding out whatever may injure the English name, at a moment when every reader will be interested in Joanna's personal appearance, it is really edifying to notice the ingenuity by which he draws into light from a dark corner a very unjust account of it, and neglects, though lying upon the high road, a very pleasing one. Both are from English pens. Grafton, a chronicler but little read, being a stiff-necked John Bull, thought fit to say, that no wonder Joanna should be a virgin, since her 'foule face' was a satisfactory solution of that particular merit. Holinshead, on the other hand, a chronicler somewhat later, every way more important, and at one time universally read, has given a very pleasing testimony to the interesting character of Joanna's person and engaging manners. Neither of these men lived till the following century, so that personally this evidence is none at all. Grafton sullenly and carelessly believed as he wished to believe; Holinshead took pains to inquire, and reports undoubtedly the general impression of France. But I cite the case as illustrating M. Michelet's candor.⁴³

The circumstantial incidents of the execution, unless with more space than I can now command, I should be unwilling to relate. I should fear to injure, by imperfect report, a martyrdom which to myself appears so unspeakably grand. Yet for a purpose, pointing not

at Joanna, but at M. Michelet — viz., to convince him that an Englishman is capable of thinking more highly of *La Pucelle* than even her admiring countryman, I shall, in parting, allude to one or two traits in Joanna's demeanor on the scaffold, and to one or two in that of the bystanders, which authorize me in questioning an opinion of his upon this martyr's firmness. The reader ought to be reminded that Joanna D'Arc was subjected to an unusually unfair trial of opinion. Any of the elder Christian martyrs had not much to fear of *personal* rancor. The martyr was chiefly regarded as the enemy of Cæsar; at times, also, where any knowledge of the Christian faith and morals existed, with the enmity that arises spontaneously in the worldly against the spiritual. But the martyr, though disloyal, was not supposed to be, therefore, anti-national; and still less was *individually* hateful. What was hated (if anything) belonged to his class, not to himself separately. Now, Joanna, if hated at all, was hated personally, and in Rouen on national grounds. Hence there would be a certainty of calumny arising against *her*, such as would not affect martyrs in general. That being the case, it would follow of necessity that some people would impute to her a willingness to recant. No innocence could escape *that*. Now, had she really testified this willingness on the scaffold, it would have argued nothing at all but the weakness of a genial nature shrinking from the instant approach of torment. And those will often pity that weakness most, who, in their own persons, would yield to it least. Meantime, there never was a calumny uttered that drew less support from the recorded circumstances. It rests upon no *positive* testimony, and it has a weight of contra-

dicting testimony to stem. And yet, strange to say, M. Michelet, who at times seems to admire the Maid of Arc as much as I do, is the one sole writer amongst her *friends* who lends some countenance to this odious slander. His words are, that, if she did not utter this word *recant* with her lips, she uttered it in her heart. ‘Whether she *said* the word is uncertain; but I affirm that she *thought* it.’

Now, I affirm that she did not; not in any sense of the word ‘*thought*’ applicable to the case. Here is France calumniating *La Pucelle*: here is England defending her. M. Michelet can only mean that, on *à priori* principles, every woman must be liable to such a weakness: that Joanna was a woman; *ergo*, that she was liable to such a weakness. That is, he only supposes her to have uttered the word by an argument which presumes it impossible for anybody to have done otherwise. I, on the contrary, throw the *onus* of the argument not on presumable tendencies of nature, but on the known facts of that morning’s execution, as recorded by multitudes. What else, I demand, than mere weight of metal, absolute nobility of deportment, broke the vast line of battle then arrayed against her? What else but her meek, saintly demeanor won from the enemies, that till now had believed her a witch, tears of rapturous admiration? ‘Ten thousand men,’ says M. Michelet himself, ‘ten thousand men wept;’ and of these ten thousand the majority were political enemies knitted together by cords of superstition. What else was it but her constancy, united with her angelic gentleness, that drove the fanatic English soldier — who had sworn to throw a faggot on her scaffold, as *his* tribute of abhorrence, that *did* so, that ful-

filled his vow — suddenly to turn away a penitent for life, saying everywhere that he had seen a dove rising upon wings to heaven from the ashes where she had stood? What else drove the executioner to kneel at every shrine for pardon to *his* share in the tragedy! And if all this were insufficient, then I cite the closing act of her life, as valid on her behalf, were all other testimonies against her. The executioner had been directed to apply his torch from below. He did so. The fiery smoke rose upwards in billowing volumes. A Dominican monk was then standing almost at her side. Wrapped up in his sublime office, he saw not the danger, but still persisted in his prayers. Even then, when the last enemy was racing up the fiery stairs to seize her, even at that moment did this noblest of girls think only for *him*, the one friend that would not forsake her, and not for herself; bidding him with her last breath to care for his own preservation, but to leave *her* to God. That girl, whose latest breath ascended in this sublime expression of self-oblivion, did not utter the word *recant* either with her lips or in her heart. No; she did not, though one should rise from the dead to swear it.

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Bishop of Beauvais! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold — thou upon a down bed. But for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and torturer have the same truce from carnal torment; both sink together into sleep; together both, sometimes, kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, bishop and shepherd girl — when the pavilions of life

were closing up their shadowy curtains about you — et us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

The shepherd girl that had delivered France — she, from her dungeon, she, from her baiting at the stake, she, from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream — saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival, which man had denied to her languishing heart — that resurrection of spring-time, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from *her*, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests — were by God given back into her hands, as jewels that had been stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages), was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege, for *her* might be created, in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. The mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered, the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood that she was to reckon for had been exacted; the tears that she was to shed in secret had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold she had triumphed gloriously; victoriously she had tasted the stings of death. For all, except this comfort from her farewell dream, she had died — died, amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies — died, amidst the drums and trumpets of armies — died, amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror — rising (like the mocking mirrors of *mirage* in Arabian deserts) from the fens of death — most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins; therefore I know, bishop, that you also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself to your eyes in pure morning dews: but neither dews, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her face. But as *you* draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but *you* know them, bishop, well! Oh, mercy! what a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his laboring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off. Yet not *so* to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find a respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In glades, where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling; towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. There is the great English Prince, Regent of France. There is my Lord of Winchester, the princely cardinal, that died and made no sign. There is the Bishop of Beauvais, clinging to the shelter of thickets. What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Wil.

they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No: it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it, waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit again upon the judgment-seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah! no: he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting: the mighty audience is gathered, the Court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are arrayed, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is taking his place. Oh! but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? 'Counsel I have none: in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me*: all are silent.' Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity, but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief: I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you: yes, bishop, *SHE* — when heaven and earth are silent.

THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY.*

IT sounds like the tolling of funeral bells, as the annunciation is made of one death after another amongst those who supported our canopy of empire through the last most memorable generation. The eldest of the Wellesleys is gone: he is gathered to his fathers; and here we have his life circumstantially written.

Who, and of what origin are the Wellesleys? There is an impression current amongst the public, or there *was* an impression, that the true name of the Wellesley family is Wesley. This is a case very much resembling some of those imagined by the old scholastic logicians, where it was impossible either to deny or to affirm: saying *yes*, or saying *no*, equally you told a falsehood. The facts are these: the family was originally English; and in England, at the earliest era, there is no doubt at all that its name was De Wellesleigh, which was pronounced in the eldest times just as it is now, viz. as a dissyllable,† the first syllable sounding exactly like the cathedral city *Wells*, in

* Memoirs and Correspondence.

† '*As a dissyllable:*' — just as the *Annesley* family, of which Lord Valentia is the present head, do not pronounce their name trisyllabically (as strangers often suppose), but as the two syllables *Anns lea*, accent on the first.

Somersetshire, and the second like *lea*, (a field lying fallow.) It is plain enough, from various records, that the true historical *genesis* of the name, was precisely through that composition of words, which here, for the moment, I had imagined merely to illustrate its pronunciation. Lands in the diocese of Bath and Wells, lying by the pleasant river Perret, and almost up to the gates of Bristol, constituted the earliest possessions of the De Wellesleighs. They, seven centuries before Assay, and Waterloo, were 'seised' of certain rich *leas* belonging to *Wells*. And from these Saxon elements of the name, some have supposed the Wellesleys a Saxon race. They could not possibly have better blood: but still the thing does not follow from the premises. Neither does it follow from the *de* that they were Norman. The first De Wellesley known to history, the very tip-top man of the pedigree, is Avenant de Wellesleigh. About a hundred years nearer to our own times, viz. in 1239, came Michael de Wellesleigh; of whom the important fact is recorded, that he was the father of Wellerand de Wellesley. And what did young Mr. Wellerand perform in this wicked world, that the proud muse of history should condescend to notice his rather singular name? Reader, he was — 'killed:' that is all; and in company with Sir Robert de Percival; which again argues his Somersetshire descent: for the family of Lord Egmont, the head of all Percivals, ever was, and ever will be, in Somersetshire. But *how* was he killed? The time *when*, viz. 1303, the place *where*, are known: but the manner *how*, is not exactly stated; it was in skirmish with rascally Irish 'kernes,' fellows that (when presented at the font of Christ for baptism) had their *right*

arms covered up from the baptismal waters, in order that, still remaining consecrated to the devil, those arms might inflict a devilish blow. Such a blow, with such an unbaptized arm, the Irish villain struck; and there was an end of Wellerand de Wellesleigh. Strange that history should make an end of a man, before it had made a beginning of him. These, however, are the *facts*; which, in writing a romance about Sir Wellerand and Sir Percival, I shall have great pleasure in falsifying. But how, says the too curious reader, did the De Wellesleighs find themselves amongst Irish kernes? Had these scamps the presumption to invade Somersetshire? Did they dare to intrude into Wells? Not at all: but the pugnacious De Wellesleys had dared to intrude into Ireland. Some say in the train of Henry II. Some say — but no matter: *there* they were: and *there* they stuck like limpets. They soon engrafted themselves into the county of Kildare; from which, by means of a fortunate marriage, they leaped into the county of Meath; and in that county, as if to refute the pretended mutability of human things, they have roosted ever since. There was once a famous copy of verses floating about Europe, which asserted that, whilst other princes were destined to fight for thrones, Austria — the handsome house of Hapsburgh — should obtain them by marriage:

‘Pugnabunt alii: tu, felix Austria, nube.’⁴⁴

So of the Wellesleys: Sir Wellerand took quite the wrong way: not cudgelling, but courting, was the correct way for succeeding in Kildare. Two great estates by two separate marriages, the De Wellesleighs obtained in Kildare; and, by a third marriage in a third

generation, they obtained in the county of Meath, Castle Dangan (otherwise Dangan) with lordships as plentiful as blackberries. Castle Dangan came to them in the year of our Lord, 1411, *i. e.* before Agincourt: and, in Castle Dangan did Field-marshal, the man of Waterloo, draw his first breath, shed his first tears, and perpetrate his earliest trespasses. That is what one might call a pretty long spell for one family: four hundred and thirty-five* years has Castle Dangan furnished a nursery for the Wellesley piccaninnies. Amongst the lordships attached to Castle Dangan was *Mornington*, which more than three centuries afterwards supplied an earldom for the grandfather of Waterloo. Any further memorabilia of the Castle Dangan family are not recorded, except that in 1485 (which sure was the year of Bosworth field?) they began to omit the *de* and to write themselves Wellesley *tout court*. From indolence, I presume: for a certain lady Di. le Fl., whom once I knew, a Howard by birth,⁴⁵ of the house of Suffolk, told me as her reason for omitting the *Le*, that it caused her too much additional trouble.

So far the evidence seems in favor of Wellesley and against Wesley. But, on the other hand, during the last three centuries the Wellesleys wrote the name Wesley. They, however, were only the *maternal* ancestors of the present Wellesleys. Garret Wellesley, the last male heir of the direct line, in the year 1745, left his whole estate to one of the Cowleys, a Staffordshire family who had emigrated to Ireland in Queen Elizabeth's time, but who were, however, descended from the Wellesleys. This Cowley or Colley, taking, in 1745, the name of Wesley, received from George

* Written in 1845.

II the title of Earl Mornington: and Colley's grandson, the Marquess Wellesley of our age, was recorded in the Irish peerage as *Wesley*, Earl of Mornington; was uniformly so described up to the end of the eighteenth century; and even Arthur of Waterloo, whom most of us Europeans know pretty well, on going to India a little before his brother, was thus introduced by Lord Cornwallis to Sir John Shore (Lord Teignmouth, the Governor-general), 'Dear sir, I beg leave to introduce to you Colonel Wesley, who is a lieutenant-colonel of my regiment. He is a sensible man, and a good officer.' Posterity, for *we* are posterity in respect of Lord Cornwallis, have been very much of *his* opinion. Colonel Wesley really *is* a sensible man; and the sensible man, soon after his arrival in Bengal, under the instigation of his brother, resumed the old name of Wellesley. In reality, the name of Wesley was merely the abbreviation of indolence, as Chumley for Cholmondeley, Poinfret for Pontefract, Cicester for Cirencester; or, in Scotland, Marchbanks for Majoribanks, Chatorow for the Duke of Hamilton's French title of Chatelherault. I remember myself, in childhood, to have met a niece of John Wesley the Proto-Methodist, who always spoke of the second Lord Mornington (author of the well-known glees) as a cousin, and as intimately connected with her brother the great *foudroyant* performer on the organ. Southey, in his *Life of John Wesley*, tells us that Charles Wesley, the brother of John, and father of the great organist, had the offer from Garret Wellesley of those same estates which eventually were left to Richard Cowley. This argues a recognition of near consanguinity. Why the offer was declined, is not distinctly

explained. But if it had been accepted, Southey thinks that then we should have had no storming of Seringapatam, no Waterloo, and no Arminian Methodists. All that is not quite clear. Tippoo was booked for a desperate British vengeance by his own desperate enmity to our name, though no Lord Wellesley had been Governor-General. Napoleon, by the same fury of hatred to us, was booked for the same fate, though the scene of it might not have been Waterloo. And, as to John Wesley, why should he not have made the same schism with the English Church, because his brother Charles had become unexpectedly rich?

The Marquess Wellesley was of the same standing, as to age, or nearly so, as Mr. Pitt; though he outlived Pitt by almost forty years. Born in 1760, three or four months before the accession of George III., he was sent to Eton, at the age of eleven; and from Eton, in his eighteenth year, he was sent to Christ Church, Oxford, where he matriculated as a nobleman. He then bore the courtesy title of Viscount Wellesley; but in 1781, when he had reached his twenty-first year, he was summoned away from Oxford by the death of his father, the second Earl of Mornington. It is interesting, at this moment, to look back on the family group of children collected at Dangan Castle. The young earl was within a month of his majority: his younger brothers and sisters were, William Wellesley Pole (since dead, under the title of Lord Maryborough), then aged eighteen; Anne, since married to Henry, son of Lord Southampton, aged thirteen; *Arthur*, aged twelve; Gerald Valerian, now in the church, aged ten; Mary Elizabeth (since Lady Culling Smith), aged nine; Henry, since Lord Cowley, and British ambas-

sador to Spain, France, &c. aged eight. The new Lord Mornington showed his conscientious nature, by assuming his father's debts, and by superintending the education of his brothers. He had distinguished himself at Oxford as a scholar; but he returned thither no more, and took no degree. As Earl of Mornington he sat in the Irish House of Lords; but not being a British peer, he was able to sit also in the English House of Commons; and of this opening for a more national career, he availed himself at the age of twenty-four. Except that he favored the claims of the Irish Catholics, his policy was pretty uniformly that of Mr. Pitt. He supported that minister throughout the contests on the French Revolution; and a little earlier, on the Regency question. This came forward in 1788, on occasion of the first insanity which attacked George III. The reader, who is likely to have been born since that era, will perhaps not be acquainted with the constitutional question then at issue. It was this: Mr. Fox held that, upon any incapacity arising in the sovereign, the regency would then settle (*ipso facto* of that incapacity) upon the Prince of Wales; overlooking altogether the case in which there should be no Prince of Wales, and the case in which such a Prince might be as incapable, from youth, of exercising the powers attached to the office, as his father from disease. Mr. Pitt denied that a Prince of Wales simply *as such*, and apart from any moral fitness which he might possess, had more title to the office of regent than any lamp-lighter or scavenger. It was the province of Parliament exclusively to legislate for the particular case. The practical decision of the question was not called for, from the accident of the king's

sudden recovery: but in Ireland, from the independence asserted by the two houses of the British councils, the question grew still more complex. The Lord Lieutenant refused to transmit their address,* and Lord Mornington supported him powerfully in his refusal.

Ten years after this hot collision of parties, Lord Mornington was appointed Governor-General of India; and now first he entered upon a stage worthy of his powers. I cannot myself agree with Mr. Pearce, that 'the wisdom of his policy is now universally recognized;' because the same false views of our Indian position, which at that time caused his splendid services to be slighted in many quarters, still preponderates. All administrations alike have been intensely ignorant of Indian politics; and for the natural reason, that the business of home politics leaves them no disposable energies for affairs so distant, and with which each man's chance of any durable connection is so exceedingly small. What Lord Mornington did was this: he looked our prospects in the face. Two great enemies were then looming upon the horizon, both ignorant of our real resources, and both deluded by our imperfect use of such resources, as, even in a previous war, we had possessed. One of these enemies was Tippoo, the Sultan of Mysore: him, by the crushing energy of his arrangements, Lord Mornington was able utterly to destroy, and to distribute his dominions with equity and moderation, yet so as to prevent any

* Which adopted neither view; for by *offering* the regency of Ireland to the Prince of Wales, they negatived Mr. Fox's view, who held it to be the Prince's by inherent right; and, on the other hand, they still more openly opposed Mr. Pitt.

new coalition arising in that quarter against the British power. There is a portrait of Tippoo, of this very tiger, in the second volume of Mr. Pearce's work which expresses sufficiently the unparalleled ferocity of his nature; and it is guaranteed, by its origin, as authentic. Tippoo, from the personal interest investing him, has more fixed the attention of Europe than a much more formidable enemy: that enemy was the Mahratta confederacy, chiefly existing in the persons of the Peishwah, of Scindia, of Holkar, and the Rajah of Berar. Had these four princes been less profoundly ignorant, had they been less inveterately treacherous, they would have cost us the only⁴⁶ dreadful struggle which in India we have stood. As it was, Lord Mornington's government reduced and crippled the Mahrattas to such an extent, that in 1817, Lord Hastings found it possible to crush them for ever. Three services of a profounder nature, Lord Wellesley was enabled to do for India; first, to pave the way for the propagation of Christianity, — mighty service, stretching to the clouds, and which, in the hour of death, must have given him consolation; secondly, to enter upon the abolition of such Hindoo superstitions as are most shocking to humanity, particularly the practice of Suttee, and the barbarous exposure of dying persons, or of first-born infants at Sangor on the Ganges; finally, to promote an enlarged system of education, which (if his splendid scheme had been adopted) would have diffused its benefits all over India. It ought also to be mentioned that the expedition by way of the Red Sea against the French in Egypt, was so entirely of his suggestion and his preparation, that, to the great dishonor of Messrs. Pitt and Dundas, whose adminis-

tration was the worst, as a *war* administration, that ever misapplied, or non-applied, the resources of a mighty empire, it languished for eighteen months purely through *their* neglect.

In 1805, having staid about seven years in India, Lord Mornington was recalled, was created Marquess of Wellesley, was sent, in 1821, as Viceroy to Ireland, where there was little to do; having previously, in 1809, been sent Ambassador to the Spanish Cortes, where there was an affinity to do, but no means of doing it. The last great political act of Lord Wellesley, was the smashing of the Peel ministry in 1834; viz. by the famous resolution (which he personally drew up) for appropriating to general education in Ireland any surplus arising from the revenues of the Irish Church. Full of honors, he retired from public life at the age of seventy-five, and, for seven years more of life, dedicated his time to such literary pursuits as he had found most interesting in early youth.

Mr. Pearce, who is so capable of writing vigorously and sagaciously, has too much allowed himself to rely upon public journals. For example, he reprints the whole of the attorney-general's official information against eleven obscure persons, who, from the gallery of the Dublin theatre, did 'wickedly, riotously, and routously' hiss, groan, insult, and assault (to say nothing of their having caused and procured to be hissed, groaned, &c.) the Marquess Wellesley, Lord-Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland. This document covers more than nine pages, and, after all, omits the only fact of the least consequence viz., that several missiles were thrown by the rioters into the vice-regal box, and amongst them a quart-

bottle, which barely missed his excellency's temples. Considering the impetus acquired by the descent from the gallery, there is little doubt that such a weapon would have killed Lord Wellesley on the spot. In default however, of this weighty fact, the attorney-general favors us with memorializing the very best piece of doggerel that I remember to have read; viz., that upon divers, to wit, three thousand papers, the rioters had wickedly and maliciously written and printed, besides, observe, *causing* to be written and printed, 'No Popery,' as also the following traitorous couplet —

'The Protestants want Talbot,
As the Papists have got *all but* ;'

Meaning 'all but' that which they got some years later by means of the Clare election. Yet if, in some instances like this, Mr. Pearce has too largely drawn upon official papers, which he should rather have abstracted and condensed, on the other hand, his work has a specific value in bringing forward private documents, to which his opportunities have gained him a confidential access. Two portraits of Lord Wellesley, one in middle life, and one in old age, from a sketch by the Comte d'Orsay, are felicitously executed.

Something remains to be said of Lord Wellesley as a literary man; and towards such a judgment Mr. Pearce has contributed some very pleasing materials. As a public speaker, Lord Wellesley had that degree of brilliancy and effectual vigor, which might have been expected in a man of great talents, possessing much native sensibility to the charms of style, but not led by any personal accidents of life into a separate cultiva-

vation of oratory, or into any profound investigation of its duties and its powers on the arena of a British senate. There is less call for speaking of Lord Wellesley in this character, where he did not seek for any eminent distinction, than in the more general character of an elegant *litterateur*, which furnished to him much of his recreation in all stages of his life, and much of his consolation in the last. It is interesting to see this accomplished nobleman, in advanced age, when other resources were one by one decaying, and the lights of life were successively fading into darkness, still cheering his languid hours by the culture of classical literature, and in his eighty-second year drawing solace from those same pursuits which had given grace and distinction to his twentieth.

One or two remarks I will make upon Lord Wellesley's verses—Greek as well as Latin. The Latin lines upon Chantrey's success at Holkham in killing two woodcocks at the first shot, which subsequently he sculptured in marble and presented to Lord Leicester, are perhaps the most felicitous amongst the whole. Masquerading, in Lord Wellesley's verses, as Praxiteles, who could not well be represented with a Manon having a percussion lock, Chantrey is armed with a bow and arrows:

‘En ! trajecit aves una sagitta duas.’

In the Greek translation of *Parthenopæus*, there are a few faults as could reasonably be expected. But, first, one word as to the original Latin poem: to whom does it belong? It is traced first to Lord Grenville, who received it from his tutor (afterwards Bishop of London), who had taken it as an anonymous poem from

the 'Censor's book;' and with very little probability, it is doubtfully assigned to 'Lewis of the War Office,' meaning, no doubt, the father of Monk Lewis. By this anxiety in tracing its pedigree, the reader is led to exaggerate the pretensions of the little poem; these are inconsiderable: and there is a conspicuous fault, which it is worth while noticing, because it is one peculiarly besetting those who write modern verses with the help of a gradus, viz. that the Pentameter is often a mere reverberation of the preceding Hexameter. Thus, for instance —

' Parthenios inter saltus non amplius erro,
Non repeto Dryadum pascua læta choris ;'

and so of others, where the second line is but a variation of the first. Even Ovid, with all his fertility, and partly in consequence of his fertility, too often commits this fault. Where indeed the thought is effectually varied, so that the second line acts as a musical *minor*, succeeding to the *major*, in the first, there may happen to arise a peculiar beauty. But I speak of the ordinary case, where the second is merely the rebound of the first, presenting the same thought in a diluted form. This is the commonest resource of feeble thinking, and is also a standing temptation or snare for feeble thinking. Lord Wellesley, however, is not answerable for these faults in the original, which indeed he notices slightly as 'repetitions;' and his own Greek version is spirited and good. There, are, however, some mistakes. The second line is altogether faulty;

Χορῖα Μαιναλῖφ παντ' ἰρατεινα θεσφ
' Ἀχιυμενος λειπων

does not express the sense intended. Construed cor

rectly, this clause of the sentence would mean—‘*I sorrowfully leaving all places gracious to the Manalian god:*’ but *that* is not what Lord Wellesley designed: ‘*I leaving the woods of Cyllene, and the snowy summits of Pholoe, places that are all of them dear to Pan*’—*that* is what was meant: that is to say, not *leaving all places dear to Pan*, far from it; but *leaving a few places, every one of which is dear to Pan*. In the line beginning

Καν ἔθ' ἔψ' ἰλικιως

where the meaning is — *and if as yet, by reason of my immature age*, there is a metrical error; and ἰλικιω will not express immaturity of age. I doubt whether in the next line,

Μιθ' ἄλλη θαλλοι γουνασιν ἰθρος

γουνασιν could convey the meaning without the preposition ἔν. And in

Σπερχομαι σὶ καλεουσι θεοι

I hasten whither the gods summon me — σὶ is not the right word. It is, however, almost impossible to write Greek verses which shall be liable to no verbal objections; and the fluent movement of these verses sufficiently argues the off-hand ease with which Lord Wellesley must have *read* Greek, writing it so elegantly and with so little of apparent constraint.

Meantime the most interesting (from its circumstances) of Lord Wellesley's verses, is one to which his own English interpretation of it has done less than justice. It is a Latin epitaph on the daughter (an only child) of Lord and Lady Brougham. She died, and (as was generally known at the time) of an organic affection disturbing the action of the heart, at the early

age of eighteen. And the peculiar interest of the case lies in the suppression by this pious daughter (so far as it was possible) of her own bodily anguish, in order to beguile the mental anguish of her parents. The Latin epitaph is this :

‘ Blanda anima, e cunis heu ! longo exercita morbo,
 Inter maternas heu lachrymasque patris,
 Quas risu lenire tuo jucunda solebas,
 Et levis, et proprii vix memor ipsa mali ;
 I, pete calestes, ubi nulla est cura, recessus :
 Et tibi sit nullo mista dolore quies ! ’

The English version is this :

‘ Doom’d to long suffering from earliest years,
 Amidst your parents’ grief and pain alone
 Cheerful and gay, you smiled to soothe their tears ;
 And in *their* agonies forgot your own.
 Go, gentle spirit ; and among the blest
 From grief and pain eternal be thy rest ! ’

In the Latin, the phrase *e cunis* does not express *from your cradle upwards*. The second line is faulty in the opposition of *maternas* to *patris*. And in the fourth line *levis* conveys a false meaning : *levis* must mean either *physically light*, *i. e.* not heavy, which is not the sense, or else *tainted with levity*, which is still less the sense. What Lord Wellesley wished to say — was *light-hearted* : this he has *not* said : but neither is it easy to say it in good Latin.

I complain, however, of the whole as not bringing out Lord Wellesley’s own feeling — which feeling is partly expressed in his verses, and partly in his accompanying prose note on Miss Brougham’s mournful destiny (‘ her life was a continual illness ’) contrasted with her fortitude, her innocent gaiety, and the pious motives with which she supported this gaiety to the

ast. Not as a direct version, but as filling up the outline of Lord Wellesley, sufficiently indicated by himself, I propose this : —

‘ Child, that for thirteen * years hast fought with pain,
 Prompted by joy and depth of natural love, —
 Rest now at God’s command : oh ! not in vain
 His angel oft-times watch’d thee, — oft, above
 All pangs, that else had dimm’d thy parents’ eyes,
 Saw thy young heart victoriously rise.
 Rise now for ever, self-forgetting child,
 Rise to those choirs, where love like thine is blest,
 From pains of flesh — from filial tears assoil’d,
 Love which God’s hand shall crown with God’s own rest.’

* “*For thirteen,*” i. e., from the age of five to eighteen, at which age she died.

CHARLES LAMB.

It sounds paradoxical, but is not so in a bad sense, to say that in every literature of large compass some authors will be found to rest much of the interest which surrounds them on their essential *non*-popularity. They are good for the very reason that they are not in conformity to the current taste. They interest because to the world they are *not* interesting. They attract by means of their repulsion. Not as though it could separately furnish a reason for loving a book, that the majority of men had found it repulsive. *Primá facie*, it must suggest some presumption *against* a book, that it has failed to gain public attention. To have roused hostility indeed, to have kindled a feud against its own principles or its temper, may happen to be a good sign. *That* argues power. Hatred may be promising. The deepest revolutions of mind sometimes begin in hatred. But simply to have left a reader unimpressed, is in itself a neutral result, from which the inference is doubtful. Yet even *that*, even simple failure to impress, may happen at times to be a result from positive powers in a writer, from special originalities, such as rarely reflect themselves in the mirror of the ordinary understanding. It seems little to be perceived, how much the great scriptural⁴³ idea

of the *worldly* and the *unworldly* is found to emerge in literature as well as in life. In reality the very same combinations of moral qualities, infinitely varied, which compose the harsh physiognomy of what we call worldliness in the living groups of life, must unavoidably present themselves in books. A library divides into sections of worldly and unworldly, even as a crowd of men divides into that same majority and minority. The world has an instinct for recognizing its own; and recoils from certain qualities when exemplified in books, with the same disgust or defective sympathy as would have governed it in real life. From qualities for instance of childlike simplicity, of shy profundity, or of inspired self-communion, the world does and must turn away its face towards grosser, bolder, more determined, or more intelligible expressions of character and intellect; and not otherwise in literature, nor at all less in literature, than it does in the realities of life.

Charles Lamb, if any ever *was*, is amongst the class here contemplated; he, if ever any *has*, ranks amongst writers whose works are destined to be for ever unpopular, and yet for ever interesting; interesting, moreover, by means of those very qualities which guarantee their non-popularity. The same qualities which will be found forbidding to the worldly and the thoughtless, which will be found insipid to many even amongst robust and powerful minds, are exactly those which will continue to command a select audience in every generation. The prose essays, under the signature of *Elia*, form the most delightful section amongst Lamb's works. They traverse a peculiar field of observation, sequestered from general interest; and they are composed in a spirit too delicate and unobtrusive to catch the ear of

the noisy crowd, clamoring for strong sensations. But this retiring delicacy itself, the pensiveness chequered by gleams of the fanciful, and the humor that is touched with cross-lights of pathos, together with the picturesque quaintness of the objects casually described, whether men, or things, or usages, and, in the rear of all this, the constant recurrence to ancient recollections and to decaying forms of household life, as things retiring before the tumult of new and revolutionary generations; these traits in combination communicate to the papers a grace and strength of originality which nothing in any literature approaches, whether for degree or kind of excellence, except the most felicitous papers of Addison, such as those on Sir Roger de Coverley, and some others in the same vein of composition. They resemble Addison's papers also in the diction, which is natural and idiomatic, even to carelessness. They are equally faithful to the truth of nature; and in this only they differ remarkably — that the sketches of *Elia* reflect the stamp and impress of the writer's own character, whereas in all those of Addison the personal peculiarities of the delineator (though known to the reader from the beginning through the account of the club) are nearly quiescent. Now and then they are recalled into a momentary notice, but they do not act, or at all modify his pictures of Sir Roger or Will Wimble. *They* are slightly and amiably eccentric; but the Spectator himself, in describing them, takes the station of an ordinary observer.

Everywhere, indeed, in the writings of Lamb, and not merely in his *Elia*, the character of the writer coöperates in an undercurrent to the effect of the thing written. To understand in the fullest sense either the

gayety or the tenderness of a particular passage, you must have some insight into the peculiar bias of the writer's mind, whether native and original, or impressed gradually by the accidents of situation ; whether simply developed out of predispositions by the action of life, or violently scorched into the constitution by some fierce fever of calamity. There is in modern literature a whole class of writers, though not a large one, standing within the same category ; some marked originality of character in the writer becomes a coefficient with what he says to a common result ; you must sympathize with this *personality* in the author before you can appreciate the most significant parts of his views. In most books the writer figures as a mere abstraction, without sex or age or local station, whom the reader banishes from his thoughts. What is written seems to proceed from a blank intellect, not from a man clothed with fleshly peculiarities and differences. These peculiarities and differences neither do, nor (generally speaking) *could* intermingle with the texture of the thoughts so as to modify their force or their direction. In such books, and they form the vast majority, there is nothing to be found or to be looked for beyond the direct objective. (*Sit venia verbo!*) But, in a small section of books, the objective in the thought becomes confluent with the subjective in the thinker — the two forces unite for a joint product ; and fully to enjoy the product, or fully to apprehend either element, both must be known. It is singular, and worth inquiring into, for the reason that the Greek and Roman literature had no such books. Timon of Athens, or Diogenes, one may conceive qualified for this mode of authorship, had journalism existed to rouse them in those days ; their

'articles' would no doubt have been fearfully caustic. But, as *they* failed to produce anything, and Lucian in an after age is scarcely characteristic enough for the purpose, perhaps we may pronounce Rabelais and Montaigne the earliest of writers in the class described. In the century following *theirs*, came Sir Thomas Browne, and immediately after *him* La Fontaine. Then come Swift, Sterne, with others less distinguished; in Germany, Hippel, the friend of Kaut, Harmann, the obscure; and the greatest of the whole body — John Paul Fr. Richter. In *him*, from the strength and determinateness of his nature as well as from the great extent of his writing, the philosophy of this interaction between the author as a human agency and his theme as an intellectual reägency, might best be studied. From *him* might be derived the largest number of cases illustrating boldly his absorption of the universal into the concrete — of the pure intellect into the human nature of the author. But nowhere could illustrations be found more interesting — shy, delicate, evanescent — shy as lightning, delicate and evanescent as the colored pencillings on a frosty night from the northern lights, than in the better parts of Lamb.

To appreciate Lamb, therefore, it is requisite that his character and temperament should be understood in their coyest and most wayward features. A capital defect it would be if these could not be gathered silently from Lamb's works themselves. It would be a fatal mode of dependency upon an alien and separable accident if they needed an external commentary. But they do *not*. The syllables lurk up and down the writings of Lamb which decipher his eccentric nature. His character lies there dispersed in anagram; and to

any attentive reader the regathering and restoration of the total word from its scattered parts is inevitable without an effort. Still it is always a satisfaction in knowing a result, to know also its *why* and *how*; and in so far as every character is likely to be modified by the particular experience, sad or joyous, through which the life has travelled, it is a good contribution towards the knowledge of that resulting character as a whole to have a sketch of that particular experience. What trials did it impose? What energies did it task? What temptations did it unfold? These calls upon the moral powers, which, in music so stormy, many a life is doomed to hear, how were they faced? The character in a capital degree moulds oftentimes the life, but the life *always* in a subordinate degree moulds the character. And the character being in this case of Lamb so much of a key to the writings, it becomes important that the life should be traced, however briefly, as a key to the character.

That is *one* reason for detaining the reader with some slight record of Lamb's career. Such a record by preference and of right belongs to a case where the intellectual display, which is the sole ground of any public interest at all in the man, has been intensely modified by the *humanities* and moral *personalities* distinguishing the subject. We read a *Physiology*, and need no information as to the life and conversation of its author; a meditative poem becomes far better understood by the light of such information; but a work of genial and at the same time eccentric sentiment, wandering upon untrodden paths, is barely intelligible without it. There is a good reason for arresting judgment on the writer, that the court may receive evidence

on the life of the man. But there is another reason, and, in any other place, a better; which reason lies in the extraordinary value of the life considered separately for itself. Logically, it is not allowable to say that *here*; and considering the principal purpose of this paper, any possible *independent* value of the life must rank as a better reason for reporting it. Since, in a case where the original object is professedly to estimate the writings of a man, whatever promises to further that object must, merely by that tendency, have, in relation to that place, a momentary advantage which it would lose if valued upon a more abstract scale. Liberated from this casual office of throwing light upon a book — raised to its grander station of a solemn deposition to the moral capacities of man in conflict with calamity — viewed as a return made into the chanceries of heaven — upon an issue directed from that court to try the amount of power lodged in a poor desolate pair of human creatures for facing the very anarchy of storms — this obscure life of the two Lambs, brother and sister, (for the two lives were one life,) rises into a grandeur that is not paralleled once in a generation.

Rich, indeed, in moral instruction was the life of Charles Lamb; and perhaps in one chief result it offers to the thoughtful observer a lesson of consolation that is awful, and of hope that ought to be immortal, viz., in the record which it furnishes, that by meekness of submission, and by earnest conflict with evil, in the spirit of cheerfulness it is possible ultimately to disarm or to blunt the very heaviest of curses — even the curse of lunacy. Had it been whispered, in hours of infancy, to Lamb, by the angel who stood by his

cradle — ‘Thou, and the sister that walks by ten years before thee, shall be through life, each to each, the solitary fountain of comfort; and except it be from this fountain of mutual love, except it be as brother and sister, ye shall not taste the cup of peace on earth!’ — here, if there was sorrow in reversion, there was also consolation.

But what funeral swamps would have instantly engulfed this consolation, had some meddling fiend prolonged the revelation, and, holding up the curtain from the sad feature a little longer, had said scornfully — ‘Peace on earth! Peace for you two, Charles and Mary Lamb! What peace is possible under the curse which even now is gathering against your heads? Is there peace on earth for the lunatic — peace for the parenticide — peace for the girl that, without warning, and without time granted for a penitential cry to Heaven, sends her mother to the last audit? And then, without treachery, speaking bare truth, this prophet of woe might have added — ‘Thou, also, thyself, Charles Lamb, thou in thy proper person, shalt enter the skirts of this dreadful hail-storm; even thou shalt taste the secrets of lunacy, and enter as a captive its house of bondage; whilst over thy sister the accursed scorpion shall hang suspended through life, like death hanging over the beds of hospitals, striking at times, but more often threatening to strike: or withdrawing its instant menaces only to lay bare her mind more bitterly to the persecutions of a haunted memory!’ Considering the nature of the calamity, in the first place; considering, in the second place, its lifelong duration; and, in the last place, considering the quality of the resistance by which it was met, and

under what circumstances of humble resources in money or friends — we have come to the deliberate judgment, that the whole range of history scarcely presents a more affecting spectacle of perpetual sorrow humiliation, or conflict, and that was supported to the end, (that is, through forty years,) with more resignation, or with more absolute victory.

Charles Lamb was born in February of the year 1775. His immediate descent was humble; for his father, though on one particular occasion civilly described as a 'scrivener,' was in reality a domestic servant to Mr. Salt — a bencher (and therefore a barrister of some standing) in the Inner Temple. John Lamb the father belonged by birth to Lincoln; from which city, being transferred to London whilst yet a boy, he entered the service of Mr. Salt without delay; and apparently from this period throughout his life continued in this good man's household to support the honorable relation of a Roman client to his *patronus*, much more than that of a mercenary servant to a transient and capricious master. The terms on which he seems to live with the family of the Lambs, argue a kindness and a liberality of nature on both sides. John Lamb recommended himself as an attendant by the versatility of his accomplishments; and Mr. Salt, being a widower without children, which means in effect an old bachelor, naturally valued that encyclopædic range of dexterity which made his house independent of external aid for every mode of service. To kill one's own mutton is but an operose way of arriving at a dinner, and often a more costly way; whereas to combine one's own carpenter, locksmith, hair-dresser groom, &c., all in one man's person, — to have a

Robinson Crusoe, up to all emergencies of life, always in waiting, — is a luxury of the highest class for one who values his ease.

A consultation is held more freely with a man familiar to one's eye, and more profitably with a man aware of one's peculiar habits. And another advantage from such an arrangement is, that one gets any little alteration or repair executed on the spot. To hear is to obey, and by an inversion of Pope's rule —

‘ One always *is*, and never *to be*, blest.’

People of one sole accomplishment, like the *homo unius libri*, are usually within that narrow circle disagreeably perfect, and therefore apt to be arrogant. People who can do all things, usually do every one of them ill; and living in a constant effort to deny this too palpable fact they become irritably vain. But Mr. Lamb the elder seems to have been bent on perfection. He did all things; he did them all well; and yet was neither gloomily arrogant nor testily vain. And being conscious apparently that all mechanic excellences tend to illiberal results, unless counteracted by perpetual sacrifices to the muses, he went so far as to cultivate poetry; he even printed his poems, and were we possessed of a copy, (which we are *not*, nor probably is the Vatican,) it would give us pleasure at this point to digress for a moment, and to cut them up, purely on considerations of respect to the author's memory. It is hardly to be supposed that they did not really merit castigation; and we should best show the sincerity of our respect for Mr. Lamb, senior, in all those cases where we *could* conscientiously profess respect, by an unlimited application of the knout in the cases where we could *not*.

The whole family of the Lambs seems to have won from Mr. Salt the consideration which is granted to humble friends ; and from acquaintances nearer to their own standing, to have won a tenderness of esteem such as is granted to decayed gentry. Yet naturally, the social rank of the parents, as people still living, must have operated disadvantageously for the children. It is hard, even for the practised philosopher to distinguish aristocratic graces of manner, and capacities of delicate feeling, in people whose very hearth and dress bear witness to the servile humility of their station. Yet such distinctions as wild gifts of nature, timidly and half-unconsciously asserted themselves in the unpretending Lambs. Already in *their* favor there existed a silent privilege analogous to the famous one of Lord Kinsale. He, by special grant from the crown, is allowed, when standing before the king, to forget that he is not himself a king ; the bearer of that peerage, through all generations, has the privilege of wearing his hat in the royal presence. By a general though tacit concession of the same nature, the rising generation of the Lambs, John and Charles, the two sons, and Mary Lamb, the only daughter, were permitted to forget that their grandmother had been a housekeeper for sixty years, and that their father had worn a livery. Charles Lamb, individually was so entirely humble, and so careless of social distinctions, that he has taken pleasure in recurring to these very facts in the family records amongst the most genial of his Elia recollections. He only continued to remember, without shame, and with a peculiar tenderness, these badges of plebeian rank, when everybody else, amongst the few survivors that could have known of their existence, had long dismissed them from their thoughts.

Probably through Mr. Salt's interest, Charles Lamb, in the autumn of 1782, when he wanted something more than four months of completing his eighth year, received a presentation to the magnificent school of Christ's Hospital. The late Dr. Arnold, when contrasting the school of his own boyish experience, Winchester, with Rugby, the school confided to his management, found nothing so much to regret in the circumstances of the latter as its forlorn condition with respect to historical traditions. Wherever these were wanting, and supposing the school of sufficient magnitude, it occurred to Dr. Arnold that something of a compensatory effect for impressing the imagination might be obtained by connecting the school with the nation through the link of annual prizes issuing from the exchequer. An official basis of national patronage might prove a substitute for an antiquarian or ancestral basis. Happily for the great educational foundations of London, none of them is in the naked condition of Rugby. Westminster, St. Paul's, Merchant Tailors,' the Charter-house, &c., are all crowned with historical recollections; and Christ's Hospital, besides the original honors of its foundation, so fitted to a consecrated place in a youthful imagination — an asylum for boy-students, provided by a boy-king — innocent, religious, prematurely wise, and prematurely called away from earth — has also a mode of perpetual connection with the state. It enjoys, therefore, *both* of Dr. Arnold's advantages. Indeed, all the great foundation schools of London, bearing in their very codes of organization the impress of a double function — viz., the conservation of sound learning and of pure religion — wear something of a monastic or cloisteral

character in their aspect and usages, which is peculiarly impressive, and even pathetic, amidst the uproars of a capital the most colossal and tumultuous upon earth.

Here Lamb remained until his fifteenth year, which year threw him on the world, and brought him alongside the golden dawn of the French Revolution. Here he learned a little elementary Greek, and of Latin more than a little; for the Latin notes to Mr. Cary (of Dante celebrity) though brief, are sufficient to reveal a true sense of what is graceful and idiomatic in Latinity. We say this, who have studied that subject more than most men. It is not that Lamb would have found it an easy task to compose a long paper in Latin — nobody *can* find it easy to do what he has no motive for habitually practising; but a single sentence of Latin wearing the secret countersign of the ‘sweet Roman hand,’ ascertains sufficiently that, in reading Latin classics, a man feels and comprehends their peculiar force or beauty. That is enough. It is requisite to a man’s expansion of mind that he should make acquaintance with a literature so radically differing from all modern literature as is the Latin. It is *not* requisite that he should practise Latin composition. Here, therefore, Lamb obtained in sufficient perfection one priceless accomplishment, which even singly throws a graceful air of liberality over all the rest of a man’s attainments: having rarely any pecuniary value, it challenges the more attention to its intellectual value. Here also Lamb commenced the friendships of his life; and, of all which he formed he lost none. Here it was, as the consummation and crown of his advantages from the time-honored hospital, that he came to know ‘Poor

Until 1796, it is probable that he lost sight of Coleridge, who was then occupied with Cambridge, having been transferred thither as a 'Grecian' from the house of Christ Church. The year 1795, was a year of change and fearful calamity for Charles Lamb. On that year revolved the wheels of his after-life. During the three years succeeding to his school days, he had held a clerkship in the South Sea House. In 1795, he was transferred to the India House. As a junior clerk, he could not receive more than a slender salary; but even this was important to the support of his parents and sister. They lived together in lodgings near Holborn; and in the spring of 1796, Miss Lamb, (having previously shown signs of lunacy at intervals,) in a sudden paroxysm of her disease, seized a knife from the dinner table, and stabbed her mother, who died upon the spot. A coroner's inquest easily ascertained the nature of a case which was transparent in all its circumstances, and never for a moment indecisive as regarded the medical symptoms. The poor young lady was transferred to the establishment for lunatics at Hoxton. She soon recovered, we believe; but her relapses were as sudden as her recoveries, and she continued through life to revisit, for periods of uncertain seclusion, this house of woe. This calamity of his fireside, followed soon after by the death of his father, who had for some time been in a state of imbecility, determined the future destiny of Lamb. Apprehending, with the perfect grief of perfect love, that his sister's fate was sealed for life — viewing her as his own greatest benefactress, which she really *had* been through her advantage by ten years of age — yielding with impassioned readiness to the depth of his fraternal affec-

tion, what at any rate he would have yielded to the sanctities of duty as interpreted by his own conscience — he resolved for ever to resign all thoughts of marriage with a young lady whom he loved, for ever to abandon all ambitious prospects that might have tempted him into uncertainties, humbly to content himself with the *certainties* of his Indian clerkship, to dedicate himself for the future to the care of his desolate and prostrate sister, and to leave the rest to God. These sacrifices he made in no hurry or tumult, but deliberately, and in religious tranquillity. These sacrifices were accepted in heaven — and even on this earth they *had* their reward. She, for whom he gave up all, in turn gave up all for *him*. She devoted herself to his comfort. Many times she returned to the lunatic establishment, but many times she was restored to illuminate the household for *him*; and of the happiness which for forty years and more he had, no hour seemed true that was not derived from *her*. Henceforward, therefore, until he was emancipated by the noble generosity of the East India Directors, Lamb's time for nine-and-twenty years, was given to the India House.

'*O fortunati nimium, sua si bona nōrint,*' is applicable to more people than '*agricolæ.*' Clerks of the India House are as blind to their own advantages as the blindest of ploughmen. Lamb was summoned, it is true, through the larger and more genial section of his life, to the drudgery of a copying clerk — making confidential entries into mighty folios, on the subject of calicoes and muslins. By this means, whether he would or not, he became gradually the author of a great 'serial' work, in a frightful number of volumes,

on as dry a department of literature as the children of the great desert could have suggested. Nobody, he must have felt, was ever likely to study this great work of his, not even Dr. Dryasdust. He had written in vain, which is not pleasant to know. There would be no second edition called for by a discerning public in Leadenhall Street; not a chance of *that*. And consequently the *opera omnia* of Lamb, drawn up in a hideous battalion, at the cost of labor so enormous, would be known only to certain families of spiders in one generation, and of rats in the next. Such a labor of Sisyphus, — the rolling up a ponderous stone to the summit of a hill only that it might roll back again by the gravitation of its own dulness, — seems a bad employment for a man of genius in his meridian energies. And yet, perhaps not. Perhaps the collective wisdom of Europe could not have devised for Lamb a more favorable condition of toil than this very India House clerkship. His works (his Leadenhall Street works) were certainly not read; popular they *could* not be, for they were not read by anybody; but then, to balance *that*, they were not reviewed. His folios were of that order, which (in Cowper's words,) 'not even critics criticize.' *Is that* nothing? Is it no happiness to escape the hands of scoundrel reviewers? Many of us escape being *read*; the worshipful reviewer does not find time to read a line of us; but we do not for that reason escape being criticized, 'shown up,' and martyred. The list of *errata* again, committed by Lamb, was probably of a magnitude to alarm any possible compositor; and yet these *errata* will never be known to mankind. They are dead and buried. They have been cut off prematurely; and for any effect upon

their generation, might as well never have existed. Then the returns, in a pecuniary sense, from these folios — how important were *they!* It is not common, certainly, to write folios; but neither is it common to draw a steady income of from 300*l.* to 400*l.* per annum from volumes of any size. This will be admitted; but would it not have been better to draw the income without the toil? Doubtless it would always be more agreeable to have the rose without the thorn. But in the case before us, taken with all its circumstances, we deny that the toil is truly typified as a thorn; so far from being a thorn in Lamb's daily life, on the contrary, it was a second rose ingrafted upon the original rose of the income, that he had to earn it by a moderate but continued exertion. Holidays, in a national establishment so great as the India House, and in our too fervid period, naturally could not be frequent; yet all great English corporations are gracious masters, and indulgences of this nature could be obtained on a special application. Not to count upon these accidents of favor, we find that the regular toil of those in Lamb's situation, began at ten in the morning and ended as the clock struck four in the afternoon. Six hours composed the daily contribution of labor, that is precisely one fourth part of the total day. Only that, as Sunday was exempted, the rigorous expression of the quota was one fourth of six-sevenths, which makes six twenty-eighths and not six twenty-fourths of the total time. Less toil than this would hardly have availed to deepen the sense of value in that large part of the time still remaining disposable. Had there been any resumption whatever of labor in the evening, though but for half an hour, that one en

croachment upon the broad continuous area of the eighteen free hours would have killed the tranquillity of the whole day, by *sowing* it (so to speak) with intermitting anxieties — anxieties that, like tides, would still be rising and falling. Whereas now, at the early hour of four, when daylight is yet lingering in the air, even at the dead of winter, in the latitude of London, and when the *enjoying* section of the day is barely commencing, everything is left which a man would care to retain. A mere *dilettante* or amateur student, having no mercenary interest concerned, would, upon a refinement of luxury — would, upon choice, give up so so much time to study, were it only to sharpen the value of what remained for pleasure. And thus the only difference between the scheme of the India House distributing his time for Lamb, and the scheme of a wise voluptuary distributing his time for himself, lay, not in the *amount* of time deducted from enjoyment, but in the particular mode of appropriating that deduction. An *intellectual* appropriation of the time, though casually fatiguing, must have pleasures of its own; pleasures denied to a task so mechanic and so monotonous as that of reiterating endless records of sales or consignments not *essentially* varying from each other. True; it is pleasanter to pursue an intellectual study than to make entries in a ledger. But even an intellectual toil is toil; few people can support it for more than six hours in a day. And the only question, therefore, after all, is, at what period of the day a man would prefer taking this pleasure of study. Now, upon that point, as regards the case of Lamb, there is no opening for doubt. He, amongst his *Popular Fallacies*, admirably illustrates

the necessity of evening and artificial lights to the prosperity of studies. After exposing, with the perfection of fun, the savage unsociality of those elder ancestors who lived (if life it was) before lamp-light was invented, showing that 'jokes came in with candles,' since 'what repartees *could* have passed' when people were 'grumbling at one another in the dark,' and 'when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbor's cheek to be sure that he understood it?' — he goes on to say, 'This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry,' viz., because they had no candle-light. Even eating he objects to as a very imperfect thing in the dark; you are not convinced that a dish tastes as it should do by the promise of its name, if you dine in the twilight without candles. Seeing is believing. 'The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally.' The sight guarantees the taste. For instance, 'Can you tell pork from veal in the dark, or distinguish Sherries from pure Malaga?' To all enjoyments whatsoever candles are indispensable as an adjunct; but, as to *reading*, 'there is,' says Lamb, 'absolutely no such thing but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day in gardens, but it was labor thrown away. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. The mild internal light, that reveals the fine shapings of poetry, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Milton's morning hymn in Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight; and Taylor's rich description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper.' This view of evening and candle-light as involved in literature may seem no more than a pleas-

ant extravaganza; and no doubt it is in the nature of such gayeties to travel a little into exaggeration, but substantially it is certain that Lamb's feelings pointed habitually in the direction here indicated. His literary studies, whether taking the color of tasks or diversions, courted the aid of evening, which, by means of physical weariness, produces a more luxurious state of repose than belongs to the labor hours of day, and courted the aid of lamp-light, which, as Lord Bacon remarked, gives a gorgeousness to human pomps and pleasures, such as would be vainly sought from the homeliness of daylight. The hours, therefore, which were withdrawn from his own control by the India House, happened to be exactly that part of the day which Lamb least valued, and could least have turned to account.

The account given of Lamb's friends, of those whom he endeavored to love because he admired them, or to esteem intellectually because he loved them personally, is too much colored for general acquiescence by Sergeant Talfourd's own early prepossessions. It is natural that an intellectual man like the Sergeant, personally made known in youth to people, whom from childhood he had regarded as powers in the ideal world, and in some instances as representing the eternities of human speculation, since their names had perhaps dawned upon his mind in concurrence with the very earliest suggestion of topics which they had treated, should overrate their intrinsic grandeur. Hazlitt accordingly is styled 'The great thinker.' But had he been such potentially, there was an absolute bar to his achievement of that station in act and consummation. No man *can* be a great thinker in our days upon large

and elaborate questions without being also a great student. To think profoundly, it is indispensable that a man should have read down to his own starting point, and have read as a collating student to the particular stage at which he himself takes up the subject. At this moment, for instance, how could geology be treated otherwise than childishly by one who should rely upon the encyclopædias of 1800? or comparative physiology by the most ingenious of men unacquainted with Marshall Hall, and with the apocalyptic glimpses of secrets unfolding under the hands of Professor Owen? In such a condition of undisciplined thinking, the ablest man thinks to no purpose. He lingers upon parts of the inquiry that have lost the importance which once they had, under imperfect charts of the subject; he wastes his strength upon problems that have become obsolete; he loses his way in paths that are not in the line of direction upon which the improved speculation is moving; or he gives narrow conjectural solutions of difficulties that have long since received sure and comprehensive ones. It is as if a man should in these days attempt to colonize, and yet, through inertia or through ignorance, should leave behind him all modern resources of chemistry, of chemical agriculture, or of steam-power. Hazlitt had read nothing. Unacquainted with Grecian philosophy, with Scholastic philosophy, and with the recomposition of these philosophies in the looms of Germany during the last sixty and odd years, trusting merely to the unrestrained instincts of keen mother-wit — whence should Hazlitt have had the materials for great thinking? It is through the collation of many abortive voyages to polar regions that a man gains his first chance of entering the polar

basin, or of running ahead on a true line of approach to it. The very reason for Hazlitt's defect in eloquence as a lecturer, is sufficient also as a reason why he could not have been a comprehensive thinker. 'He was not eloquent,' says the Sergeant, 'in the true sense of the term.' But why? Because it seems 'his thoughts were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening's excitement can rouse,' — an explanation which leaves us in doubt whether Hazlitt forfeited his chance of eloquence by accommodating himself to this evening's excitement, or by gloomily resisting it. Our own explanation is different; Hazlitt was not eloquent, because he was discontinuous. No man can be eloquent whose thoughts are abrupt, insulated, capricious, and (to borrow an impressive word from Coleridge) non-sequacious. Eloquence resides not in separate or fractional ideas, but in the relations of manifold ideas, and in the mode of their evolution from each other. It is not indeed enough that the ideas should be many, and their relations coherent; the main condition lies in the *key* of the evolution, in the *law* of the succession. The elements are nothing without the atmosphere that moulds, and the dynamic forces that combine. Now Hazlitt's brilliancy is seen chiefly in separate splinterings of phrase or image which throw upon the eye a vitreous scintillation for a moment, but spread no deep suffusions of color, and distribute no masses of mighty shadow. A flash, a solitary flash, and all is gone. Rhetoric, according to its quality, stands in many degrees of relation to the permanences of truth; and all rhetoric, like all flesh, is partly unreal, and the glory of both is fleeting. Even the mighty rhetoric

of Sir Thomas Browne, or Jeremy Taylor, to whom only it has been granted to open the trumpot-stop on that great organ of passion, oftentimes leaves behind it the sense of sadness which belongs to beautiful apparitions starting out of darkness upon the morbid eye, only to be reclaimed by darkness in the instant of their birth, or which belongs to pageantries in the clouds. But if all rhetoric is a mode of pyrotechny, and all pyrotechnics are by necessity fugacious, yet even in these frail pomps, there are many degrees of frailty. Some fireworks require an hour's duration for the expansion of their glory; others, as if formed from fulminating powder, expire in the very act of birth. Precisely on that scale of duration and of power stand the glitterings of rhetoric that are not worked into the texture, but washed on from the outside. Hazlitt's thoughts were of the same fractured and discontinuous order as his illustrative images — seldom or never self-diffusive; and *that* is a sufficient argument that he had never cultivated philosophic thinking.

Not, however, to conceal any part of the truth, we are bound to acknowledge that Lamb thought otherwise on this point, manifesting what seemed to us an extravagant admiration of Hazlitt, and perhaps even in part for that very glitter which we are denouncing — at least he did so in conversation with ourselves. But, on the other hand, as this conversation travelled a little into the tone of a disputation, and *our* frost on this point might seem to justify some undue fervor by way of balance, it is very possible that Lamb did not speak his absolute and most dispassionate judgment. And yet again, if he *did*, may we, with all reverence for Lamb's exquisite genius have permission to say — that his own

constitution of intellect sinned by this very habit of discontinuity. It was a habit of mind not unlikely to be cherished by his habits of life. Amongst these habits was the excess of his social kindness. He scorned so much to deny his company and his redundant hospitality to any man who manifested a wish for either by calling upon him, that he almost seemed to think it a criminality in himself if, by accident, he really *was* from home on your visit, rather than by possibility a negligence in you, that had not forewarned him of your intention. All his life, from this and other causes, he must have read in the spirit of one liable to sudden interruption; like a dragoon, in fact, reading with one foot in the stirrup, when expecting momentarily a summons to mount for action. In such situations, reading by snatches, and by intervals of precarious leisure, people form the habit of seeking and unduly valuing condensations of the meaning, where in reality the truth suffers by this short-hand exhibition, or else they demand too vivid illustrations of the meaning. Lord Chesterfield himself, so brilliant a man by nature, already therefore making a morbid estimate of brilliancy, and so hurried throughout his life as a public man, read under this double coercion for craving instantaneous effects. At one period, his only time for reading was in the morning, whilst under the hands of his hair-dresser; compelled to take the hastiest of flying shots at his author, naturally he demanded a very conspicuous mark to fire at. But the author could not, in so brief a space, be always sure to crowd any very prominent objects on the eye, unless by being audaciously oracular and peremptory as regarded the sentiment, or flashy in excess as regarded its expression.

Come now, my friend,' was Lord Chesterfield's morning adjuration to his author; 'come now, cut it short — don't prose — don't hum and haw.' The author had doubtless no ambition to enter his name on the honorable and ancient roll of gentleman proser; probably he conceived himself not at all tainted with the asthmatic infirmity of humming and hawing; but as to 'cutting it short,' how could he be sure of meeting his lordship's expectations in that point, unless by dismissing the limitations that might be requisite to fit the idea for use, or the adjuncts that might be requisite to integrate its truth, or the final consequences that might involve some deep *arrière pensée*, which, coming last in the succession, might oftentimes be calculated to lie deepest on the mind. To be lawfully and usefully brilliant after this rapid fashion, a man must come forward as a refresher of old truths, where *his* suppressions are supplied by the reader's memory; not as an expounder of new truths, where oftentimes a dislocated fraction of the true is more dangerous than the false itself.

To read therefore habitually, by hurried instalments, has this bad tendency — that it is likely to found a taste for modes of composition too artificially irritating, and to disturb the equilibrium of the judgment in relation to the colorings of style. Lamb, however, whose constitution of mind was even ideally sound in reference to the natural, the simple, the genuine, might seem of all men least liable to a taint in this direction. And undoubtedly he *was* so, as regarded those modes of beauty which nature had specially qualified him for apprehending. Else, and in relation to other modes of beauty, where his sense of the true, and of its dis-

inction from the spurious, had been an acquired sense, it is impossible for us to hide from ourselves — that not through habits only, not through stress of injurious accidents only, but by original structure and temperament of mind, Lamb had a bias towards those very defects on which rested the startling characteristics of style which we have been noticing. He himself, we fear, not bribed by indulgent feelings to another, not moved by friendship, but by native tendency, shrank from the continuous, from the sustained, from the elaborate.

The elaborate, indeed, without which much truth and beauty must perish in germ, was by name the object of his invectives. The instances are many, in his own beautiful essays, where he literally collapses, literally sinks away from openings suddenly offering themselves to flights of pathos or solemnity in direct prosecution of his own theme. On any such summons where an ascending impulse, and an untired pinion were required, he *refuses* himself (to use military language) invariably. The least observing reader of *Elia* cannot have failed to notice that the most felicitous passages always accomplish their circuit in a few sentences. The gyration within which the sentiment wheels, no matter of what kind it may be, is always the shortest possible. It does not prolong itself, and it does not repeat itself. But in fact, other features in Lamb's mind would have argued this feature by analogy, had we by accident been left unaware of it directly. It is not by chance, or without a deep ground in his nature, *common* to all his qualities, both affirmative and negative, that Lamb had an insensibility to music more absolute than can have been often shared by any human creature, or

perhaps than was ever before acknowledged so candidly. The sense of music, — as a pleasurable sense, or as any sense at all other than of certain unmeaning and impertinent differences in respect to high and low, sharp or flat, — was utterly obliterated as with a sponge by nature herself from Lamb's organization. It was a corollary, from the same large *substratum* in his nature, that Lamb had no sense of the rhythmical in prose compositions. Rhythmus, or pomp of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses, in the structure of sentences, were effects of art as much thrown away upon *him* as the voice of the charmer upon the deaf adder. We ourselves, occupying the very station of polar opposition to that of Lamb, being as morbidly, perhaps, in the one excess as he in the other, naturally detected this omission in Lamb's nature at an early stage of our acquaintance. Not the fabled Regulus with his eyelids torn away, and his uncurtained eye-balls exposed to the noon-tide glare of a Carthaginian sun, could have shrieked with more anguish of recoil from torture than we from certain sentences and periods in which Lamb perceived no fault at all. *Pomp*, in our apprehension, was an idea of two categories; the *pompous* might be spurious, but it might also be genuine. It is well to love the simple — *we* love it; nor is there any opposition at all between *that* and the very glory of pomp. But, as we once put the case to Lamb, if, as a musician, as the leader of a mighty orchestra, you had this theme offered to you — ‘Belshazzar the king gave a great feast to a thousand of his lords’ — or this, ‘And on a certain day, Marcus Cicero stood up, and in a set speech rendered solemn thanks to Caius Caesar for Quintus Ligarius pardoned, and for Marcus Marcellus

restored' — surely no man would deny that, in such a case, simplicity, though in a passive sense not lawfully absent, must stand aside as totally insufficient for the *positive* part. Simplicity might guide, even here, but could not furnish the power; a rudder it might be, but not an oar or a sail. This, Lamb was ready to allow; as an intellectual *quiddity*, he recognized pomp in the character of a privileged thing; he was obliged to do so; for take away from great ceremonial festivals, such as the solemn rendering of thanks, the celebration of national anniversaries, the commemoration of public benefactors, &c., the element of pomp, and you take away their very meaning and life; but, whilst allowing a place for it in the rubric of the logician, it is certain that, *sensuously*, Lamb would not have sympathized with it, nor have *felt* its justification in any concrete instance. We find a difficulty in pursuing this subject, without greatly exceeding our limits. We pause, therefore, and add only this one suggestion as partly explanatory of the case. Lamb had the dramatic intellect and taste, perhaps, in perfection; of the Epic, he had none at all. Here, as happens sometimes to men of genius preternaturally endowed in one direction, he might be considered as almost starved. A favorite of nature, so eminent in some directions, by what right could he complain that her bounties were not indiscriminate? From this defect in his nature it arose, that, except by culture and by reflection, Lamb had no genial appreciation of Milton. The solemn planetary wheelings of the *Paradise Lost* were not to his taste. What he *did* comprehend, were the motions like those of lightning, the fierce angular coruscations of that wild agency which comes forward so vividly in the sudden

περιπέτεια, in the revolutionary catastrophe, and in the tumultuous conflicts, through persons or through situations, of the tragic drama.

There is another vice in Mr. Hazlitt's mode of composition, viz., the habit of trite quotation, too common to have challenged much notice, were it not for these reasons: 1st, That Sergeant Talfourd speaks of it in equivocal terms, as a fault perhaps, but as a 'felicitous' fault, 'trailing after it a line of golden associations;' 2dly, because the practice involves a dishonesty. On occasion of No. 1, we must profess our belief that a more ample explanation from the Sergeant would have left him in substantial harmony with ourselves. We cannot conceive the author of *Ion*, and the friend of Wordsworth, seriously to countenance that paralytic 'mouth-diarrhœa,' (to borrow a phrase of Coleridge's) — that *fluxe de bouche* (to borrow an earlier phrase of Archbishop Huet's,) which places the reader at the mercy of a man's tritest remembrances from his most school-boy reading. To have the verbal memory infested with tags of verse and 'cues' of rhyme is in itself an infirmity as vulgar and as morbid as the stable-boy's habit of whistling slang airs upon the mere mechanical excitement of a bar or two whistled by some other blockhead in some other stable. The very stage has grown weary of ridiculing a folly, that having been long since expelled from decent society has taken refuge amongst the most imbecile of authors. Was Mr. Hazlitt then of that class? No; he was a man of great talents, and of capacity for greater things than he ever attempted, though without any pretensions of the philosophic kind ascribed to him by the Sergeant. Meantime the reason for resisting the example and

practice of Hazlitt lies in this — that essentially it is at war with sincerity, the foundation of all good writing, to express one's own thoughts by another man's words. This dilemma arises. The thought is, or it is not, worthy of that emphasis which belongs to a metrical expression of it. If it is *not*, then we shall be guilty of a mere folly in pushing into strong relief that which confessedly cannot support it. If it *is*, then how incredible that a thought strongly conceived, and bearing about it the impress of one's own individuality, should naturally, and without dissimulation or falsehood, bend to another man's expression of it! Simply to back one's own view, by a similar view derived from another, may be useful; a quotation that repeats one's own sentiment, but in a varied form, has the grace which belongs to the *idem in alio*, the same radical idea expressed with a difference — similarity in dissimilarity; but to throw one's own thoughts, matter and form, through alien organs so absolutely as to make another man one's interpreter for evil and good, is either to confess a singular laxity of thinking that can so flexibly adapt itself to any casual form of words, or else to confess that sort of carelessness about the expression which draws its real origin from a sense of indifference about the things to be expressed. Utterly at war this distressing practice is with all simplicity and earnestness of writing; it argues a state of indolent ease inconsistent with the pressure and coercion of strong fermenting thoughts, before we can be at leisure for idle or chance quotations. But lastly, in reference to No. 2, we must add that the practice is signally dishonest. It 'trails after it a line of golden associations.' Yes, and the burglar, who leaves an army-tailor's after

a midnight visit, trails after him perhaps a long roll of gold bullion epaulettes which may look pretty by lamp-light.

But *that*, in the present condition of moral philosophy amongst the police, is accounted robbery; and to benefit too much by quotations is little less. At this moment we have in our eye a work, at one time not without celebrity, which is one continued *cento* of splendid passages from other people. The natural effect from so much fine writing is, that the reader rises with the impression of having been engaged upon a most eloquent work. Meantime the whole is a series of mosaics; a tessellation made up from borrowed fragments: and first, when the reader's attention is expressly directed upon the fact, he becomes aware that the nominal author has contributed nothing more to the book than a few passages of transition, or brief clauses of connection.

In the year 1796, the main incident occurring of any importance for English literature was the publication by Southey of an epic poem. This poem, the *Joan of Arc*, was the earliest work of much pretension amongst all that Southey wrote; and by many degrees it was the worst. In the four great narrative poems of his later years, there is a combination of two striking qualities, viz., a peculiar command over the *visually* splendid, connected with a deep-toned grandeur of moral pathos. Especially we find this union in the *Thalaba* and the *Roderick*; but in the *Joan of Arc* we miss it. What splendor there is for the fancy and the eye belongs chiefly to the *Vision*, contributed by Coleridge, and this was subsequently withdrawn. The fault lay in Southey's political relations at that era;

his sympathy with the French Revolution in its earlier stages had been boundless; in all respects it was a noble sympathy, fading only as the gorgeous coloring faded from the emblazonries of that awful event, drooping only when the promises of that golden dawn sickened under stationary eclipse. In 1796, Southey was yet under the tyranny of his own earliest fascination; in *his* eyes the Revolution had suffered a momentary blight from reflexes of panic; but blight of some kind is incident to every harvest on which human hopes are suspended. Bad auguries were also ascending from the unchaining of martial instincts. But that the Revolution, having ploughed its way through unparalleled storms, was preparing to face other storms, did but quicken the apprehensiveness of his love — did but quicken the duty of giving utterance to this love. Hence came the rapid composition of the poem, which cost less time in writing than in printing. Hence, also, came the choice of his heroine. What he needed in his central character was, a heart with a capacity for the wrath of Hebrew prophets applied to ancient abuses, and for evangelic pity applied to the sufferings of nations. This heart, with this double capacity — where should he seek it? A French heart it must be, or how should it follow with its sympathies a French movement? *There* lay Southey's reason for adopting the Maid of Orleans as the depositary of hopes and aspirations on behalf of France as fervid as his own. In choosing this heroine, so inadequately known at that time, Southey testified at least his own nobility of feeling;⁵⁰ but in executing his choice, he and his friends overlooked two faults fatal to his purpose. One was this: sympathy with the French Revolution

meant sympathy with the opening prospects of man — meant sympathy with the Pariah of every clime — with all that suffered social wrong, or saddened in hopeless bondage.

That was the movement at work in the French Revolution. But the movement of Joanna d'Arc took a different direction. In *her* day also, it is true, the human heart had yearned after the same vast enfranchisement for her children of labor as afterwards worked in the great vision of the French Revolution. In *her* days also, and shortly before them, the human hand had sought by bloody acts to realize this dream of the heart. And in her childhood, Joanna had not been insensible to these premature motions upon a path too bloody and too dark to be safe. But this view of human misery had been utterly absorbed to *her* by the special misery then desolating France. The lilies of France had been trampled underfoot by the conquering stranger. Within fifty years, in three pitched battles that resounded to the ends of the earth, the chivalry of France had been exterminated. Her oriflamme had been dragged through the dust. The eldest son of Baptism had been prostrated. The daughter of France had been surrendered on coercion as a bride to her English conqueror. The child of that marriage, so ignominious to the land, was king of France by the consent of Christendom; that child's uncle domineered as regent of France; and that child's armies were in military possession of the land. But were they undisputed masters? No; and *there* precisely lay the sorrow of the time. Under a perfect conquest there would have been repose; whereas the presence of the English armies did but furnish a plea, masking itself in

patriotism, for gatherings everywhere of lawless marauders; of soldiers that had deserted their banners; and of robbers by profession. This was the woe of France more even than the military dishonor. That dishonor had been palliated from the first by the genealogical pretensions of the English royal family to the French throne, and these pretensions were strengthened in the person of the present claimant. But the military desolation of France, this it was that woke the faith of Joanna in her own heavenly mission of deliverance. It was the attitude of her prostrate country, crying night and day for purification from blood, and not from feudal oppression, that swallowed up the thoughts of the impassioned girl. But *that* was not the cry that uttered itself afterwards in the French Revolution. In Joanna's days, the first step towards rest for France was by expulsion of the foreigner. Independence of a foreign yoke, liberation as between people and people, was the one ransom to be paid for French honor and peace. *That* debt settled, there might come a time for thinking of civil liberties. But this time was not within the prospects of the poor shepherdess. The field — the area of her sympathies — never coincided with that of a Revolutionary period. It followed, therefore, that Southey *could* not have raised Joanna (with her condition of feeling) by any management, into the interpreter of his own. *That* was the first error in his poem, and it was irremediable. The second was — and strangely enough this also escaped notice — that the heroine of Southey is made to close her career precisely at the point when its grandeur commences. She believed herself to have a mission for the deliverance of France; and the great instrument which she was

authorized to use towards this end, was the king, Charles VII. Him she was to crown. With this coronation, her triumph, in the plain historical sense, ended. And *there* ends Southey's poem. But exactly at this point, the grander stage of her mission commences, viz., the ransom which she, a solitary girl, paid in her own person for the national deliverance. The grander half of the story was thus sacrificed, as being irrelevant to Southey's political object; and yet, after all, the half which he retained did not at all symbolize that object. It is singular, indeed, to find a long poem, on an ancient subject, adapting itself hieroglyphically to a modern purpose; 2dly, to find it failing of this purpose; and 3dly, if it had *not* failed, so planned that it could have succeeded only by a sacrifice of all that was grandest in the theme.

To these capital oversights, Southey, Coleridge, and Lamb, were all joint parties; the two first as concerned in the composition, the last as a frank though friendly reviewer of it in his private correspondence with Coleridge. It is, however, some palliation of these oversights, and a very singular fact in itself, that neither from English authorities nor from French, though the two nations were equally brought into close connection with the career of that extraordinary girl, could any adequate view be obtained of her character and acts. The *official* records of her trial, apart from which nothing can be depended upon, were first in the course of publication from the Paris press during the currency of last year. First in 1847, about four hundred and sixteen years after her ashes had been dispersed to the winds, could it be seen distinctly

through the clouds of fierce partisanship and national prejudices, what had been the frenzy of the persecution against her, and the utter desolation of her position ; what had been the grandeur of her conscientious existence.

Anxious that our readers should see Lamb from as many angles as possible, we have obtained from an old friend of his a memorial — slight, but such as the circumstances allowed — of an evening spent with Charles and Mary Lamb, in the winter of 1821–22. The record is of the most unambitious character ; it pretends to nothing as the reader will see, not so much as to a pun, which it really required some singularity of luck to have missed from Charles Lamb, who often continued to fire puns, as minute guns, all through the evening. But the more unpretending this record is, the more appropriate it becomes by that very fact to the memory of *him* who, amongst all authors, was the humblest and least pretending. We have often thought that the famous epitaph written for his grave by Piron, the cynical author of *La Métromanie*, might have come from Lamb, were it not for one objection ; Lamb's benign heart would have recoiled from a sarcasm, however effective, inscribed upon a grave-stone ; or from a jest, however playful, that tended to a vindictive sneer amongst his own farewell words. We once translated this Piron epitaph into a kind of rambling Drayton couplet ; and the only point needing explanation is, that, from the accident of scientific men, fellows of the Royal Society being usually very solemn men, with an extra chance, therefore, for being dull men in conversation, naturally it arose that some wit amongst our great-grandfathers

translated F. R. S. into a short-hand expression for a Fellow Remarkably Stupid; to which version of the three letters our English epitaph alludes. The French original of Piron is this:

‘Ci git Piron; qui ne fut rien;
Pas même académicien.’

The bitter arrow of the second line was feathered to hit the French Académie, who had declined to elect him a member. Our translation is this:

‘Here lies Piron; who was — nothing; or, if *that* could be,
was less:

How! — nothing? Yes, nothing; not so much as F. R. S.’

But now to our friend’s memorandum:

“October 6, 1848.

“MY DEAR X. — You ask me for some memorial, however trivial, of any dinner party, supper party, water party, no matter what, that I can circumstantially recall to recollection, by any features whatever, puns or repartees, wisdom or wit, connecting it with Charles Lamb. I grieve to say that my meetings of *any* sort with Lamb were few, though spread through a score of years. That sounds odd for one that loved Lamb so entirely, and so much venerated his character. But the reason was, that I so seldom visited London, and Lamb so seldom quitted it. Somewhere about 1810 and 1812 I must have met Lamb repeatedly at the *Courier Office* in the Strand; that is, at Coleridge’s, to whom, as an intimate friend, Mr. Stuart (a proprietor of the paper) gave up for a time the use of some rooms in the office. Thither, in the London season, (May especially and June.) resorted Lamb, Godwin, Sir H. Davy, and, once or twice, Wordsworth, who visited Sir George Beaumont’s Leicestershire residence

of Coleridge early in the spring, and then travelled up to Grosvenor Square with Sir George and Lady Beaumont: '*spectatum veniens, veniens spectetur ut ipse.*'

But in these miscellaneous gatherings, Lamb said little except when an opening arose for a pun. And how effectual that sort of small shot was from *him*, I need not say to anybody who remembers his infirmity of stammering, and his dexterous management of it for purposes of light and shade. He was often able to train the roll of stammers in settling upon the words immediately preceding the effective one; by which means the key-note of the jest or sarcasm, benefiting by the sudden liberation of his embargoed voice, was delivered with the force of a pistol shot. That stammer was worth an annuity to him as an ally of his wit. Firing under cover of that advantage, he did triple execution; for, in the first place, the distressing sympathy of the hearers with *his* distress of utterance won for him unavoidably the silence of deep attention; and then, whilst he had us all hoaxed into this attitude of mute suspense by an appearance of distress that he perhaps did not really feel, down came a plunging shot into the very thick of us, with ten times the effect it would else have had. If his stammering, however, often did him true 'yeoman's service,' sometimes it led him into scrapes. Coleridge told me of a ludicrous embarrassment which it caused him at Hastings. Lamb had been medically advised to a course of sea-bathing; and accordingly at the door of his bathing machine, whilst he stood shivering with cold, two stout fellows laid hold of him, one at each shoulder, like heraldic supporters: they waited for the word of command

from their principal, who began the following oration to them: 'Hear me, men! Take notice of this — I am to be dipped.' What more he would have said is unknown to land or sea or bathing machines; for having reached the word dipped, he commenced such a rolling fire of Di — di — di — di, that when at length he descended *à plomb* upon the full word *dipped*, the two men, rather tired of the long suspense, became satisfied that they had reached what lawyers call the 'operative clause' of the sentence; and both exclaiming at once, 'Oh yes, Sir, we're quite aware of *that*,' down they plunged him into the sea. On emerging, Lamb sobbed so much from the cold, that he found no voice suitable to his indignation; from necessity he seemed tranquil; and again addressing the men, who stood respectfully listening, he began thus: 'Men! is it possible to obtain your attention?' 'Oh surely, Sir, by all means.' 'Then listen: once more I tell you, I am to be di — di — di —' — and then, with a burst of indignation, 'dipped, I tell you,' — 'Oh decidedly, Sir,' rejoined the men, 'decidedly,' and down the stammerer went for the second time. Petrified with cold and wrath, once more Lamb made a feeble attempt at explanation — 'Grant me pa — pa — patience; is it mum — um — murder you me — me — mean? Again and a — ga — ga — gain, I tell you, I'm to be di — di — di — dipped,' now speaking furiously, with the voice of an injured man. 'Oh yes, Sir,' the men replied, 'we know that, we fully understood it,' and for the third time down went Lamb into the sea. 'Oh limbs of Satan!' he said, on coming up for the third time, 'it's now too late; I tell you that I am — no, that I *was* — to be di — di — dipped only *once*.'

Since the rencontres with Lamb at Coleridge's, I had met him once or twice at literary dinner parties. One of these occurred at the house of Messrs. Taylor & Hessey, the publishers. I myself was suffering too much from illness at the time to take any pleasure in what passed, or to notice it with any vigilance of attention. Lamb, I remember, as usual, was full of gayety; and as usual he rose too rapidly to the zenith of his gayety; for he shot upwards like a rocket, and, as usual, people said he was 'tipsy.' To me Lamb never seemed intoxicated, but at most acerially elevated. He never talked nonsense, which is a great point gained; nor polemically, which is a greater; for it is a dreadful thing to find a drunken man bent upon converting oneself; nor sentimentally, which is greatest of all. You can stand a man's fraternizing with you; or if he swears an eternal friendship only once in an hour, you do not think of calling the police; but once in every three minutes is too much. Lamb did none of these things; he was always rational, quiet, and gentlemanly in his habits. Nothing memorable, I am sure, passed upon this occasion, which was in November, of 1821; and yet the dinner was memorable by means of one fact not discovered until many years later. Amongst the company of all literary men, sate a murderer, and a murderer of a freezing class; cool, calculating, wholesale in his operations, and moving all along under the advantages of unsuspecting domestic confidence and domestic opportunities. This was Mr. Wainwright, who was subsequently brought to trial, but not for any of his murders, and transported for life. The story has been told by Sergeant Talfourd, in the second volume of these 'Final Memoirs,' and pre-

viously by Sir Edward B. Lytton. Both have been much blamed for the use made of this extraordinary case; but we know not why. In itself it is a most remarkable case, for more reasons than one. It is remarkable for the appalling revelation which it makes of power spread through the hands of people not liable to suspicion, for purposes the most dreadful. It is remarkable also by the contrast which existed in this case between the murderer's appearance, and the terrific purposes with which he was always dallying. He was a contributor to a journal in which I also had written several papers. This formed a shadowy link between us; and, ill as I was, I looked more attentively at *him* than at anybody else. Yet there were several men of wit and genius present, amongst whom Lamb (as I have said), and Thomas Hood, Hamilton Reynolds, and Allan Cunningham. But *them* I already knew, whereas Mr. W. I now saw for the first time and the last. What interested me about *him* was this, the papers which had been pointed out to me as his, (signed *Janus Weathercock, Vinkbooms, &c.*) were written in a spirit of coxcombry that did not so much disgust as amuse. The writer could not conceal the ostentatious pleasure which he took in the luxurious fittings up of his rooms, in the fancied splendor of his *bijouterie, &c.* Yet it was easy for a man of any experience to read two facts in all this idle *étalage*; one being, that his finery was but of a second-rate order; the other, that he was a *parvenu*, not at home even amongst his second-rate splendor. So far there was nothing to distinguish Mr. W——'s papers from the papers of other triflers. But in this point there *was*, viz., that in his judgments upon the great Italian

masters of painting, Da Vinci, Titian, &c., there seemed a tone of sincerity and of native sensibility, as in one who spoke from himself, and was not merely a copier from books. This it was that interested me; as also his reviews of the chief Italian engravers, Morghen, Volpato, &c.; not for the manner, which overflowed with levities and impertinence, but for the substance of his judgments in those cases where I happened to have had an opportunity of judging for myself. Here arose also a claim upon Lamb's attention; for Lamb and his sister had a deep feeling for what was excellent in painting. Accordingly Lamb paid him a great deal of attention, and continued to speak of him for years with an interest that seemed disproportioned to his pretensions. This might be owing in part to an indirect compliment paid to Miss Lamb in one of W — 's papers; else his appearance would rather have repelled Lamb; it was commonplace, and better suited to express the dandyism which overspread the surface of his manner, than the unaffected sensibility which apparently lay in his nature. Dandy or not, however, this man, on account of the schism in his papers, so much amiable puppyism on one side, so much deep feeling on the other, (feeling, applied to some of the grandest objects that earth has to show,) did really move a trifle of interest in me, on a day when I hated the face of man and woman. Yet again, if I had known this man for the murderer that even then he was, what sudden loss of interest, what sudden growth of another interest, would have changed the face of that party! Trivial creature, that didst carry thy dreadful eye kindling with perpetual treasons! Dreadful creature, that didst carry thy trivial

eye, mantling with eternal levity, over the sleeping surfaces of confiding household life — oh, what a revolution for man wouldst thou have accomplished had thy deep wickedness prospered! What *was* that wickedness? In a few words I will say.

At this time (October 1848)²¹ the whole British island is appalled by a new chapter in the history of poisoning. Locusta in ancient Rome, Madame Brinvilliers in Paris, were people of original genius: not in any new artifice of toxicology, not in the mere management of poisons, was the audacity of their genius displayed. No; but in profiting by domestic openings for murder, unsuspected through their very atrocity. Such an opening was made some years ago by those who saw the possibility of founding purses for parents upon the murder of their children. This was done upon a larger scale than had been suspected, and upon a plausible pretence. To bury a corpse is costly; but of a hundred children only a few, in the ordinary course of mortality, will die within a given time. Five shillings a-piece will produce £25 annually, and *that* will bury a considerable number. On this principle arose Infant Burial Societies. For a few shillings annually, a parent could secure a funeral for every child. If the child died, a few guineas fell due to the parent, and the funeral was accomplished without cost of *his*. But on this arose the suggestion — Why not execute an insurance of this nature twenty times over? One single insurance pays for the funeral — the other nineteen are so much clear gain, a *lucro ponatur*, for the parents. Yes; but on the supposition that the child died! twenty are no better than one, unless they are gathered into the garner. Now, if the child died

naturally, all was right; but how, if the child did *not* die? Why, clearly this, — the child that *can* die, and won't die, may be made to die. There are many ways of doing that; and it is shocking to know, that, according to recent discoveries, poison is comparatively a very merciful mode of murder. Six years ago a dreadful communication was made to the public by a medical man, viz., that three thousand children were annually burned to death under circumstances showing too clearly that they had been left by their mothers with the means and the temptations to set themselves on fire in her absence. But more shocking, because more lingering, are the deaths by artificial appliances of wet, cold, hunger, bad diet, and disturbed sleep, to the frail constitutions of children. By that machinery it is, and not by poison, that the majority qualify themselves for claiming the funeral allowances. Here, however, there occur to any man, on reflection, two eventual restraints on the extension of this domestic curse: — 1st, as there is no pretext for wanting more than one funeral on account of one child, any insurances beyond one are in themselves a ground of suspicion. Now, if any plan were devised for securing the *publication* of such insurances, the suspicions would travel as fast as the grounds for them. 2dly, it occurs, that eventually the evil checks itself, since a society established on the ordinary rates of mortality would be ruined when a murderous stimulation was applied to that rate too extensively. Still it is certain that, for a season, this atrocity *has* prospered in manufacturing districts for some years, and more recently, as judicial investigations have shown, in one agricultural district of Essex. Now, Mr. W. —'s scheme

of murder was, in its outline, the very same, but not applied to the narrow purpose of obtaining burials from a public fund. He persuaded, for instance, two beautiful young ladies, visitors in his family, to insure their lives for a short period of two years. This insurance was repeated in several different offices, until a sum of £18,000 had been secured in the event of their deaths within the two years. Mr. W—— took care that they *should* die, and very suddenly, within that period; and then, having previously secured from his victims an assignment to himself of this claim, he endeavored to make this assignment available. But the offices, which had vainly endeavored to extract from the young ladies any satisfactory account of the reasons for this limited insurance, had their suspicions at last strongly roused. One office had recently experienced a case of the same nature, in which also the young lady had been poisoned by the man in whose behalf she had effected the insurance; all the offices declined to pay; actions at law arose; in the course of the investigation which followed, Mr. W.'s character was fully exposed. Finally, in the midst of the embarrassments which ensued, he committed forgery, and was transported.

From this Mr. W——, some few days afterwards, I received an invitation to a dinner party, expressed in terms that were obligingly earnest. He mentioned the names of his principal guests, and amongst them rested most upon those of Lamb and Sir David Wilkie. From an accident I was unable to attend, and greatly regretted it. Sir David one might rarely happen to see, except at a crowded party. But as regarded Lamb, I was sure to see him or to hear of him again

in some way or other within a short time. This opportunity, in fact, offered itself within a month through the kindness of the Lambs themselves. They had heard of my being in solitary lodgings, and insisted on my coming to dine with them, which more than once I did in the winter of 1821-22.

The mere reception by the Lambs was so full of goodness and hospitable feeling, that it kindled animation in the most cheerless or torpid of invalids. I cannot imagine that any *memorabilia* occurred during the visit; but I will use the time that would else be lost upon the settling of that point, in putting down any triviality that occurs to my recollection. Both Lamb and myself had a furious love for nonsense, headlong nonsense. Excepting Professor Wilson, I have known nobody who had the same passion to the same extent. And things of that nature better illustrate the *realities* of Lamb's social life than the gravities, which weighing so sadly on his solitary hours he sought to banish from his moments of relaxation.

There were no strangers; Charles Lamb, his sister, and myself made up the party. Even this was done in kindness. They knew that I should have been oppressed by an effort such as must be made in the society of strangers; and they placed me by their own residence, where I could say as little or as much as I pleased.

We dined about five o'clock, and it was one of the hospitalities inevitable to the Lambs, that any game which they might receive from rural friends in the course of the week, was reserved for the day of a friend's dining with them.

In regard to wine, Lamb and myself had the same

habit — perhaps it rose to the dignity of a principle — viz., to take a great deal *during* dinner — none *after* it. Consequently, as Miss Lamb (who drank only water) retired almost with the dinner itself, nothing remained for men of our principles, the rigor of which we had illustrated by taking rather too much of old port before the cloth was drawn, except talking; amœbæan colloquy, or, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, a dialogue of 'brisk reciprocation.' But this was impossible; over Lamb, at this period of his life, there passed regularly, after taking wine, a brief eclipse of sleep. It descended upon him as softly as a shadow. In a gross person, laden with superfluous flesh, and sleeping heavily, this would have been disagreeable; but in Lamb, thin even to meagreness, spare and wiry as an Arab of the desert, or as Thomas Aquinas, wasted by scholastic vigils, the affection of sleep seemed rather a network of aerial gossamer than of earthly cobweb — more like a golden haze falling upon him gently from the heavens than a cloud exhaling upwards from the flesh. Motionless in his chair as a bust, breathing so gently as scarcely to seem certainly alive, he presented the image of repose midway between life and death, like the repose of sculpture; and to one who knew his history, a repose affectingly contrasting with the calamities and internal storms of his life. I have heard more persons than I can now distinctly recall, observe of Lamb when sleeping, that his countenance in that state assumed an expression almost seraphic, from its intellectual beauty of outline, its childlike simplicity and its benignity. It could not be called a transfiguration that sleep had worked in his face; for the features wore essentially the same expression when waking; but sleep spiritual

ized that expression, exalted it, and also harmonized it. Much of the change lay in that last process. The eyes it was that disturbed the unity of effect in Lamb's waking face. They gave a restlessness to the character of his intellect, shifting, like northern lights, through every mode of combination with fantastic playfulness, and sometimes by fiery gleams obliterating for the moment that pure light of benignity which was the predominant reading on his features. Some people have supposed that Lamb had Jewish blood in his veins, which seemed to account for his gleaming eyes. I might be so ; but this notion found little confidence in Lamb's own way of treating the gloomy mediæval traditions propagated throughout Europe about the Jews, and their secret enmity to Christian races. Lamb, indeed, might not be more serious than Shakspeare is supposed to have been in his Shylock ; yet he spoke at times as from a station of wilful bigotry, and seemed (whether laughingly or not) to sympathize with the barbarous Christian superstitions upon the pretended bloody practices of the Jews, and of the early Jewish physicians. Being himself a Lincoln man, he treated Sir Hugh⁵² of Lincoln, the young child that suffered death by secret assassination in the Jewish quarter rather than suppress his daily anthems to the Virgin, as a true historical personage on the rolls of martyrdom : careless that this fable, like that of the apprentice murdered out of jealousy by his master, the architect, had destroyed its own authority by ubiquitous diffusion. All over Europe the same legend of the murdered apprentice and the martyred child reappears under different names — so that in effect the verification of the tale is none at all, because it is unanimous ; is too narrow

because it is too impossibly broad. Lamb, however, though it was often hard to say whether he were not secretly laughing, swore to the truth of all these old fables, and treated the liberalities of the present generation on such points as mere fantastic and effeminate affectations, which, no doubt, they often are as regards the sincerity of those who profess them. The bigotry which it pleased his fancy to assume, he used like a sword against the Jew, as the official weapon of the Christian, upon the same principle that a Capulet would have drawn upon a Montague, without conceiving it any duty of *his* to rip up the grounds of so ancient a quarrel; it was a feud handed down to him by his ancestors, and it was *their* business to see that originally it had been an honest feud. I cannot yet believe that Lamb, if seriously aware of any family interconnection with Jewish blood, would, even in jest, have held that one-sided language. More probable it is, that the fiery eye recorded not any alliance with Jewish blood, but that disastrous alliance with insanity which tainted his own life, and laid desolate his sister's.

On awakening from his brief slumber, Lamb sat for some time in profound silence, and then, with the most startling rapidity, sang out — ‘Diddle, diddle, dumpkins;’ not looking at me, but as if soliloquizing. For five minutes he relapsed into the same deep silence; from which again he started up into the same abrupt utterance of — ‘Diddle, diddle, dumpkins.’ I could not help laughing aloud at the extreme energy of this sudden communication, contrasted with the deep silence that went before and followed. Lamb smilingly begged to know what I was laughing at, and with a look of as much surprise as if it were I tha’

had done something unaccountable, and not himself. I told him (as was the truth) that there had suddenly occurred to me the possibility of my being in some future period or other called on to give an account of this very evening before some literary committee. The committee might say to me — (supposing the case that I outlived him) — ‘ You dined with Mr. Lamb in January, 1822 ; now, can you remember any remark or memorable observation which that celebrated man made before or after dinner ? ’

I as *respondent*. ‘ Oh yes, I can.’

Com. ‘ What was it ? ’

Resp. ‘ Diddle, diddle, dumpkins.’

Com. ‘ And was this his only observation ? Did Mr. Lamb not strengthen this remark by some other of the same nature ? ’

Resp. ‘ Yes, he did.’

Com. ‘ And what was it ? ’

Resp. ‘ Diddle, diddle, dumpkins.’

Com. ‘ What is your secret opinion of Dumpkins ? Do you conceive Dumpkins to have been a thing or a person ? ’

Resp. ‘ I conceive Dumpkins to have been a person, having the rights of a person.’

Com. ‘ Capable, for instance, of suing and being sued ? ’

Resp. ‘ Yes, capable of both ; though I have reason to think there would have been very little use in suing Dumpkins.’

Com. ‘ How so ? Are the committee to understand that you, the respondent, in your own case, have found it a vain speculation, countenanced only by visionary lawyers, to sue Dumpkins ? ’

Resp. 'No; I never lost a shilling by Dumpkins, the reason for which may be that Dumpkins never owed me a shilling; but from his *prænomèn* of "diddle," I apprehend that he was too well acquainted with joint-stock companies!'

Com. 'And your opinion, is, that he may have diddled Mr. Lamb?'

Resp. 'I conceive it to be not unlikely.'

Com. 'And, perhaps, from Mr. Lamb's pathetic reiteration of his name. "Diddle, diddle," you would be disposed to infer that Dumpkins had practised his diddling talents upon Mr. L. more than once?'

Resp. 'I think it probable.'

Lamb laughed and brightened up; tea was announced; Miss Lamb returned. The cloud had passed away from Lamb's spirits, and again he realized the pleasure of evening, which, in *his* apprehension, was so essential to the pleasure of literature.

On the table lay a copy of Wordsworth, in two volumes: it was the edition of Longman, printed about the time of Waterloo. Wordsworth was held in little consideration, I believe, amongst the house of Longman; at any rate, *their* editions of his works were got up in the most slovenly manner. In particular, the table of contents was drawn up like a short-hand bill of parcels. By accident the book lay open at a part of this table, where the sonnet beginning —

'Alas! what boots the long laborious quest' —

had been entered with mercantile speed, as —

'Alas what boots,' —

'Yes,' said Lamb, reading this entry in a dolorous tone of voice, 'he may well say *that*. I paid Hoby

three guineas for a pair that tore like blotting-paper when I was leaping a ditch to escape a farmer that pursued me with a pitch-fork for trespassing. But why should W. wear boots in Westmoreland? Pray, advise him to patronize shoes.'

The mercurialities of Lamb were infinite, and always uttered in a spirit of absolute recklessness for the quality or the prosperity of the sally. It seemed to liberate his spirits from some burthen of blackest melancholy which oppressed it, when he had thrown off a jest: he would not stop one instant to improve it; nor did he care the value of a straw whether it were good enough to be remembered, or so mediocre as to extort high moral indignation from a collector who refused to receive into his collection of jests and puns any that were not felicitously good or revoltingly bad.

After tea, Lamb read to me a number of beautiful compositions, which he had himself taken the trouble to copy out into a blank paper folio from unsuccessful authors. Neglected people in every class won the sympathy of Lamb. One of the poems, I remember, was a very beautiful sonnet from a volume recently published by Lord Thurlow — which, and Lamb's just remarks upon it, I could almost repeat *verbatim* at this moment, nearly twenty-seven years later, if your limits would allow me. But these, you tell me, allow of no such thing; at the utmost they allow only twelve lines more. Now all the world knows that the sonnet itself would require fourteen lines; but take fourteen from twelve, and there remains very little, I fear; besides which, I am afraid two of my twelve are already exhausted. This forces me to interrupt my account of

Lamb's reading, by reporting the very accident that *did* interrupt it in fact; since that no less characteristically expressed Lamb's peculiar spirit of kindness, (always quickening itself towards the ill-used or the down-trodden.) than it had previously expressed itself in his choice of obscure readings. Two ladies came in, one of whom at least had sunk in the scale of worldly consideration. They were ladies who would not have found much recreation in literary discussions; elderly, and habitually depressed. On *their* account, Lamb proposed whist, and in that kind effort to amuse *them*, which naturally drew forth some momentary gayeties from himself, but not of a kind to impress themselves on the recollection, the evening terminated."

We have left ourselves no room for a special examination of Lamb's writings, some of which were failures, and some were so memorably beautiful as to be uniques in their class. The character of Lamb it is, and the life-struggle of Lamb, that must fix the attention of many, even amongst those wanting in sensibility to his intellectual merits. This character and this struggle, as we have already observed, impress many traces of themselves upon Lamb's writings. Even in that view, therefore, they have a ministerial value; but separately, for themselves, they have an independent value of the highest order. Upon this point we gladly adopt the eloquent words of Sergeant Talfourd: —

‘The sweetness of Lamb's character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers; but its heroic aspect was unguessed even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance more lovely

than its self-devotion exhibits? It was not merely that he saw, through the ensanguined cloud of misfortune which had fallen upon his family, the unstained excellence of his sister, whose madness had caused it; that he was ready to take her to his own home with reverential affection, and cherish her through life; and he gave up, for *her* sake, all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it; not even that he did all this cheerfully, without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as some uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining; but that he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course to his last. So far from thinking that his sacrifice of youth and love to his sister gave him a license to follow his own caprice at the expense of her feelings, even in the lightest matters, he always wrote and spoke of her as his wiser self, his generous benefactress, of whose protecting care he was scarcely worthy.'

It must be remembered, also, which the Sergeant does not overlook, that Lamb's efforts for the becoming support of his sister lasted through a period of forty years. Twelve years before his death, the munificence of the India House, by granting him a liberal retiring allowance, had placed his own support under shelter from accidents of any kind. But this died with himself; and he could not venture to suppose that, in the event of his own death, the India House would grant to his sister the same allowance as by custom is granted to a wife. This they did; but not venturing to calculate upon such nobility of patronage, Lamb had applied himself through life to the saving of a provision for his sister under any accident to himself. And this he did with a persevering prudence, so little known in the literary class, amongst a continued tenor

of generousities, often so princely as to be scarcely known in any class.

Was this man, so memorably good by life-long sacrifice of himself, in any profound sense a Christian? The impression is, that he was *not*. We, from private communications with him, can undertake to say that, according to his knowledge and opportunities for the study of Christianity, he *was*. What has injured Lamb on this point is, that his early opinions (which, however, from the first were united with the deepest piety) are read by the inattentive, as if they had been the opinions of his mature days; secondly, that he had few religious persons amongst his friends, which made him reserved in the expression of his own views; thirdly, that in any case where he altered opinions for the better, the credit of the improvement is assigned to Coleridge. Lamb, for example, beginning life as a Unitarian, in not many years became a Trinitarian. Coleridge passed through the same changes in the same order; and here, at least, Lamb is supposed simply to have obeyed the influence, confessedly great, of Coleridge. This, on our own knowledge of Lamb's views, we pronounce to be an error. And the following extracts from Lamb's letters will show, not only that he was religiously disposed on impulses self-derived, but that, so far from obeying the bias of Coleridge, he ventured, on this one subject, firmly as regarded the matter, though humbly as regarded the manner, affectionately to reprove Coleridge.

In a letter to Coleridge, written in 1797, the year after his first great affliction, he says:

'Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance; not one Christian; not one but under-

values Christianity. Singly, what am I to do? Wesley — [have you read his life?] — was he not an elevated character? Wesley has said religion was not a solitary thing. Alas! it is necessarily so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true you write to me; but correspondence by letter and personal intimacy are widely different. Do, do write to me; and do some good to my mind — already how much “warped and relaxed” by the world!’

In a letter written about three months previously, he had not scrupled to blame Coleridge at some length for audacities of religious speculation, which seemed to him at war with the simplicities of pure religion. He says:

‘Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they give us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us two when you talk in a religious strain. Not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy than consistent with the humility of genuine piety.’

Then, after some instances of what he blames, he says:

‘Be not angry with me, Coleridge. I wish not to cavil, I know I cannot instruct you; I only wish to remind you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament, our best guide, is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a parent; and, in my poor mind, ’tis best for us so to consider him as our heavenly Father, and our best friend, without indulging too bold conceptions of his character.’

About a month later, he says:

‘Few but laugh at me for reading my Testament. They talk a language I understand not; I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to *them*’

We see by this last quotation *where* it was that Lamb originally sought for consolation. We personally can vouch that, at a maturer period, when he was approaching his fiftieth year, no change had affected his opinions upon that point; and, on the other hand, that no changes had occurred in his needs for consolation. we see, alas! in the records of his life. Whither, indeed, could he fly for comfort, if not to his Bible? And to whom was the Bible an indispensable resource, if not to Lamb? We do not undertake to say, that in his knowledge of Christianity he was everywhere profound or consistent, but he was always earnest in his aspirations after its spiritualities, and had an apprehensive sense of its power.

Charles Lamb is gone; his life was a continued struggle in the service of love the purest, and within a sphere visited by little of contemporary applause. Even his intellectual displays won but a narrow sympathy at any time, and in his earlier period were saluted with positive derision and contumely on the few occasions when they were not oppressed by entire neglect. But slowly all things right themselves. All merit, which is founded in truth, and is strong enough, reaches by sweet exhalations in the end a higher sensory; reaches higher organs of discernment, lodged in a selecter audience. But the original obtuseness or vulgarity of feeling that thwarted Lamb's just estimation in life, will continue to thwart its popular diffusion. There are even some that continue to regard him with the old hostility. And we, therefore, standing by the side of Lamb's grave, seemed to hear, on one side, (but in abated tones,) strains of the ancient malice — 'This man, that thought himself to be some-

body, is dead — is buried — is forgotten!’ and, on the other side, seemed to hear ascending, as with the solemnity of an anthem — ‘This man, that thought himself to be nobody, is dead — is buried; his life has been searched; and his memory is hallowed for ever!’

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

THERE IS NO WRITER named amongst men, of whom, so much as of Percy Bysshe Shelley, it is difficult for a conscientious critic to speak with the truth and the respect due to his exalted powers, and yet without offence to feelings the most sacred, which too memorably he outraged. The indignation which this powerful young writer provoked, had its root in no personal feelings — those might have been conciliated; in no worldly feelings — those might have proved transitory; but in feelings the holiest which brood over human life, and which guard the sanctuary of religious truth. Consequently, — which is a melancholy thought for any friend of Shelley's, — the indignation is likely to be co-extensive and coënduring with the writings that provoked it. That bitterness of scorn and defiance which still burns against his name in the most extensively meditative section of English society, namely, the religious section, is not of a nature to be propitiated. Selfish interests, being wounded, might be compensated; merely human interests might be soothed; but interests that transcend all human valuation, being *so* insulted, must upon principle reject all human ransom

or conditions of human compromise. Less than penitential recantation could not be accepted: and *that* is now impossible. "Will ye *transact*⁵³ with God?" is the indignant language of Milton in a case of that nature. And in this case the language of many pious men said aloud, — "It is for God to forgive; but we, his servants, are bound to recollect that this young man offered to Christ and to Christianity the deepest insult which ear has heard, or which it has entered into the heart of man to conceive." Others, as in Germany, had charged Christ with committing suicide, on the principle that he who tempts or solicits death by doctrines fitted to provoke that result, is virtually the causer of his own destruction. But in this sense every man commits suicide, who will not betray an interest confided to his keeping under menaces of death; the martyr, who perishes for truth, when by deserting it he might live; the patriot, who perishes for his country, when by betraying it he might win riches and honor. And, were this even otherwise, the objection would be nothing to Christians — who, recognizing the Deity in Christ, recognize his unlimited right over life. Some, again, had pointed their insults at a part more vital in Christianity, if it had happened to be as vulnerable as they fancied. The new doctrine introduced by Christ, of forgiveness to those who injure or who hate us, — on what footing was it placed? Once, at least in appearance, on the idea, that by assisting or forgiving an enemy, we should be eventually "heaping coals of fire upon his head." Mr. Howdon, in a very clever book [*Rational Investigation of the Principles of Natural Philosophy*: London, 1840], calls this "a

fiendish idea" (p. 290): and I acknowledge that to myself, in one part of my boyhood, it *did* seem a refinement of malice. My subtilizing habits, however, even in those days, soon suggested to me that this aggravation of guilt in the object of our forgiveness was not held out as the motive to the forgiveness, but as the result of it; secondly, that perhaps no aggravation of his guilt was the point contemplated, but the salutary stinging into life of his remorse, hitherto sleeping; thirdly, that every doubtful or perplexing expression must be overruled and determined by the prevailing spirit of the system in which it stands. If Mr. Howdon's sense were the true one, then this passage would be in pointed hostility to every other part of the Christian ethics.⁵⁴

These were affronts to the Founder of Christianity offered too much in the temper of malignity. But Shelley's was worse; more bitter, and with less of countenance, even in show or shadow, from any fact, or insinuation of a fact, that Scripture suggests. In his "Queen Mab," he gives a dreadful portrait of God; and that no question may arise, of *what* God? he names him; it is Jehovah. He asserts his existence; he affirms him to be "an almighty God, and vengeful as almighty." He goes on to describe him as the "omnipotent fiend," who found "none but slaves" [Israel in Egypt, no doubt] to be "his tools," and none but "a murderer" [Moses, I presume] "to be his accomplice in crime." He introduces this dreadful Almighty as speaking, and as speaking thus, —

"From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested; and created man."

But man he hates ; and he goes on to curse him ; till at the intercession of "the murderer," who is electrified into pity for the human race by the very horror of the divine curses, God promises* to send his son — only, however, for the benefit of a few. This son appears the poet tells us that —

— "the Incarnate came ; humbly he came,
Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorned by the world, his name unheard
Save by the rabble of his native town."

The poet pursues this incarnate God as a teacher of men ; teaching, "in semblance," justice, truth, and peace ; but underneath all this, kindling "quenchless flames," which eventually were destined

— "to satiate, with the blood
Of truth and freedom, his malignant soul."

He follows him to his crucifixion ; and describes him, whilst hanging on the cross, as shedding malice upon a reviler, — *malice on the cross !*

"A smile of godlike malice reillumined
His fading lineaments :"

and his parting breath is uttered in a memorable curse.

This atrocious picture of the Deity, in his dealings with man, both pre-Christian and post-Christian, is certainly placed in the mouth of the wandering Jew. But the internal evidence, as well as collateral evidence from without, make it clear that the Jew (whose version of scriptural records nobody in the poem disputes) here represents the person of the poet. Shelley had opened his career as an atheist ; and as a proselytizing atheist.

But he was then a boy. At the date of "Queen Mab," he was a young man. And we now find him advanced from the station of an atheist to the more intellectual one of a believer in God, and in the mission of Christ; but of one who fancied himself called upon to defy and to hate both, in so far as they had revealed their relations to man.

Mr. Gilfillan* thinks that "Shelley was far too harshly treated in his speculative boyhood;" and it strikes him "that, had pity and kind-hearted expostulation been tried, instead of reproach and abrupt expulsion, they might have weaned him from the dry dugs of Atheism to the milky breast of the faith and "worship of sorrow;" and the touching spectacle had been renewed, of the demoniac sitting, "clothed, and in his right mind," at the feet of Jesus. I am not of that opinion; and it is an opinion which seems to question the *sincerity* of Shelley, — that quality which in him was deepest, so as to form the basis of his nature, — if we allow ourselves to think that, by personal irritation, he had been piqued into infidelity, or that by flattering conciliation he could have been bribed back into a profession of Christianity. Like a wild horse of the pampas, he would have thrown up his heels, and *whinnied* his disdain of any man coming to catch *him* with a bribe of oats. He had a constant vision of a manger and a halter in the rear of all such caressing tempters, once having scented the gales of what he thought perfect freedom, from the lawless desert. His feud with Christianity was a craze derived from some early wrench of

* "Gallery of Literary Portraits."

his understanding, and made obstinate to the degree in which we find it, from having rooted itself in certain combinations of ideas that, once coalescing, could not be shaken loose; such as, that Christianity underpinned the corruptions of the earth, in the shape of wicked governments that might else have been overthrown, or of wicked priesthoods that, but for the shelter of shadowy and spiritual terrors, must have trembled before those whom they overawed. Kings that were clothed in bloody robes; dark hierarchies that scowled upon the poor children of the soil; these objects took up a permanent station in the background of Shelley's imagination, not to be dispossessed more than the phantom of Banquo from the festival of Macbeth, and composed a towering Babylon of mystery that, to *his* belief, could not have flourished under any umbrage less vast than that of Christianity. Such was the inextricable association of images that domineered over Shelley's mind; such was the hatred which he built upon that association, — an association casual and capricious, yet fixed and petrified as if by frost. Can we imagine the case of an angel touched by lunacy? Have we ever seen the spectacle of a human intellect, exquisite by its functions of creation, yet in one chamber of its shadowy house already ruined before the light of manhood had cleansed its darkness? Such an angel, such a man, — if ever such there were, — such a lunatic angel, such a ruined man, was Shelley, whilst yet standing on the earliest threshold of life.

Mr. Gilfillan, whose eye is quick to seize the lurking and the stealthy aspect of things, does not overlook

the absolute midsummer madness which possessed Shelley upon the subject of Christianity. Shelley's total nature was altered and darkened when that theme arose; transfiguration fell upon him. He that was so gentle, became savage; he that breathed by the very lungs of Christianity—that was so merciful, so full of tenderness and pity, of humility, of love and forgiveness, then raved and screamed like an idiot whom once I personally knew, when offended by a strain of heavenly music at the full of the moon. In both cases, it was the sense of perfect beauty revealed under the sense of morbid estrangement. This it is, as I presume, which Mr. Gilfillan alludes to in the following passage (p. 104): “On all *other* subjects the wisest of the wise, the gentlest of the gentle, the bravest of the brave, yet, when *one* topic was introduced, he became straightway insane; his eyes glared, his voice screamed, his hand vibrated frenzy.” But Mr. Gilfillan is entirely in the wrong when he countenances the notion that harsh treatment had any concern in riveting the fanaticism of Shelley. On the contrary, he met with an indulgence to the first manifestation of his anti-Christian madness, better suited to the goodness of the lunatic than to the pestilence of his lunacy. It was at Oxford that this earliest explosion of Shelleyism occurred; and though, with respect to secrets of prison-houses, and to discussions that proceed “with closed doors,” there is always a danger of being misinformed I believe, from the uniformity of such accounts as have reached myself, that the following *brief* of the matter may be relied on. Shelley, being a venerable sage of sixteen, or rather less, came to the resolution that he

would convert, and that it was his solemn duty to convert, the universal Christian church to Atheism or to Pantheism, no great matter *which*. But, as such large undertakings require time, twenty months, suppose, or even two years,—for you know, reader, that a railway requires on an average little less,—Shelley was determined to obey no impulse of youthful rashness. O no! Down with presumption, down with levity, down with boyish precipitation! Changes of religion are awful things, people must have time to think. He would move slowly and discreetly. So first he wrote a pamphlet, clearly and satisfactorily explaining the necessity of being an atheist; and with his usual exemplary courage (for, seriously, he was the least *false* of human creatures), Shelley put his name to the pamphlet, and the name of his college. His ultimate object was to accomplish a general apostasy in the Christian church of whatever name. But for one six months, it was quite enough if he caused a revolt in the Church of England. And as, before a great naval action, when the enemy is approaching, you throw a long shot or two by way of trying his range,—on that principle Shelley had thrown out his tract in Oxford. Oxford formed the advanced squadron of the English Church; and, by way of a *coup d'essai*, though in itself a bagatelle, what if he should begin with converting Oxford? To make any beginning at all is one half the battle; or, as a writer in this magazine [June, 1845] suggests, a good deal more. To speak seriously, there is something even thus far in the boyish presumption of Shelley not altogether without nobility. He affronted the armies of Christendom. Had it been

possible for *him* to be jesting, it would *not* have been noble. But here, even in the most monstrous of his undertakings, here, as always, he was perfectly sincere and single-minded. Satisfied that Atheism was the sheet-anchor of the world, he was not the person to speak by halves. Being a boy, he attacked those (upon a point the most sure to irritate) who were gray; having no station in society, he flew at the throats of none but those who *had*; weaker than an infant for the purpose before him, he planted his fist in the face of a giant, saying, "Take *that*, you devil, and *that*, and *that*." The pamphlet had been published; and though an undergraduate of Oxford is not (technically speaking) a member of the university as a responsible corporation, still he bears a near relation to it. And the heads of colleges felt a disagreeable summons to an extra meeting. There are in Oxford five-and-twenty colleges, to say nothing of halls. Frequent and full the heads assembled in Golgotha, a well-known Oxonian chamber, which, being interpreted (as scripturally we know), is "the place of a skull," and must, therefore, naturally be the place of a head. There the heads met to deliberate. What was to be done? Most of them were inclined to mercy: to proceed at all — was to proceed to extremities; and (generally speaking) to expel a man from Oxford, is to ruin his prospects in any of the liberal professions. Not, therefore, from consideration for Shelley's position in society, but on the kindest motives of forbearance towards one so young, the heads decided for declining all notice of the pamphlet. Levelled *at* them, it was not specially addressed *to* them; and, amongst the infinite children born every morning from

that mightiest of mothers, the press, why should Golgotha be supposed to have known anything, officially, of this little brat? That evasion might suit some people, but not Percy Bysshe Shelley. There was a flaw (was there?) in his process; his pleading could not, regularly, come up before the court. Very well—he would heal that defect immediately. So he sent his pamphlet, with five-and-twenty separate letters, addressed to the five-and-twenty heads of colleges in Golgotha assembled; courteously “inviting” all and every of them to notify, at his earliest convenience, his adhesion to the enclosed unanswerable arguments for Atheism. Upon this, it is undeniable that Golgotha looked black; and, after certain formalities, “invited” P. B. Shelley to consider himself expelled from the University of Oxford. But, if this were harsh, how would Mr. Gilfillan have had them to proceed? Already they had done, perhaps, too much in the way of forbearance. There were many men in Oxford who knew the standing of Shelley’s family. Already it was whispered that any man of obscure connections would have been visited for his Atheism, whether writing to Golgotha or not. And this whisper would have strengthened, had any further neglect been shown to formal letters, which requested a formal answer. The authorities of Oxford, deeply responsible to the nation in a matter of so much peril, could not have acted otherwise than they did. They were not severe. The severity was *extorted* and imposed by Shelley. But, on the other hand, in some palliation of Shelley’s conduct, it ought to be noticed that he is unfairly placed, by the undistinguishing, on the manold

station of an ordinary Oxford student. The undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge are not "boys," as a considerable proportion must be, for good reasons in other universities, — the Scottish universities, for instance, of Glasgow and St. Andrews, and many of those on the continent. Few of the English students even *begin* their residence before eighteen; and the larger proportion are at least twenty. Whereas Shelley was *really* a boy at this era, and no man. He had entered on his sixteenth year, and he was still in the earliest part of his academic career, when his obstinate and reiterated attempt to inoculate the university with a disease that he fancied indispensable to their mental health, caused his expulsion.

Imagine that Mr. Gilfillan will find himself compelled, hereafter, not less by his own second thoughts, than by the murmurs of some amongst his readers, to revise that selection of memorial traits, whether acts or habits, by which he seeks to bring Shelley, as a familiar presence, within the field of ocular apprehension. The acts selected, unless characteristic, — the habits selected, unless representative, — must be absolutely impertinent to the true identification of the man; and most of those rehearsed by Mr. Gilfillan, unless where they happen to be merely accidents of bodily constitution, are such as all of us would be sorry to suppose naturally belonging to Shelley. To "rush out of the room in terror, as his wild imagination painted to him a pair of eyes in a lady's breast," is not so much a movement of poetic frenzy, as of typhus fever — to "terrify an old lady out of her wits," by assuming, in a stage-coach, the situation of a regal sufferer from Shakspeare, is not eccentricity

so much as painful discourtesy — and to request of Rowland Hill, a man most pious and sincere, “the use of Surrey chapel,” as a theatre for publishing infidelity, would have been so thoroughly the act of a heartless coxcomb, that I, for one, cannot bring myself to believe it an authentic anecdote. Not that I doubt of Shelley’s violating at times his own better nature, as every man is capable of doing, under youth too fervid, wine too potent, and companions too misleading ; but it strikes me that, during Shelley’s very earliest youth, the mere accident of Rowland Hill’s being a man well-born and aristocratically connected, yet sacrificing these advantages to what he thought the highest of services, spiritual service on behalf of poor laboring men, would have laid a pathetic arrest upon any impulse of fun in one who, with the very same advantages of birth and position, had the same deep reverence for the rights of the poor. Willing, at all times, to forget his own pretensions in the presence of those who seemed powerless — willing in a degree that seems sublime — Shelley could not but have honored the same nobility of feeling in another. And Rowland Hill, by his guileless simplicity, had a separate hold upon a nature so childlike as Shelley’s. He was full of love to man ; so was Shelley. He was full of humility ; so was Shelley. Difference of creed, however vast the interval which it created between the men, could not have hid from Shelley’s eye the close approximation of their natures. Infidel by his intellect, Shelley was a Christian in the tendencies of his heart. As to his “lying asleep on the hearth-rug, with his small round head thrust almost into the very fire,” this, like his basking in the hottest beams of an Italian sun,” illus

trates nothing but his physical temperament. That he should be seen "devouring large pieces of bread amid his profound abstractions," simply recalls to my eye some hundred thousands of children in the streets of great cities, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, whom I am daily detecting in the same unaccountable practice; and yet, probably, with very little abstraction to excuse it; whilst his "endless cups of tea," in so tea-drinking a land as ours, have really ceased to offer the attractions of novelty which, eighty years ago, in the reign of Dr. Johnson, and under a higher price of tea, they might have secured. Such habits, however, are inoffensive, if not particularly mysterious, nor particularly significant. But that, in defect of a paper boat, Shelley should launch upon the Serpentine a fifty pound bank note, seems to my view an act of childishness, or else (which is worse) an act of empty ostentation, not likely to proceed from one who generally exhibited in his outward deportment a sense of true dignity. He who, through his family,⁵⁵ connected himself with that "spirit without spot" (as Shelley calls him in the "Adonais"), Sir Philip Sidney (a man how like in gentleness, and in faculties of mind, to himself!) — he that, by consequence, connected himself with that later descendant of Penshurst, the noble martyr of freedom, Algernon Sidney, could not have degraded himself by a pride so mean as any which roots itself in wealth. On the other hand, in the anecdote of his repeating Dr. Johnson's benign act, by "lifting a poor houseless outcast upon his back, and carrying her to a place of refuge," I read so strong a character of internal probability, that it would be gratifying to know upon what external testimony it rests.

The life of Shelley, according to the remark of Mr. Gilfillan, was "among the most romantic in literary story." Everything was romantic in his short career; everything wore a tragic interest. From his childhood he moved through a succession of afflictions. Always craving for love, loving and seeking to be loved, always he was destined to reap hatred from those with whom life had connected him. If in the darkness he raised up images of his departed hours, he would behold his family disowning him, and the home of his infancy knowing him no more; he would behold his magnificent university, that, under happier circumstances, would have gloried in his genius, rejecting him forever; he would behold his first wife, whom once he had loved passionately, through calamities arising from himself, called away to an early and tragic death. The peace after which his heart panted forever, in what dreadful contrast it stood to the eternal contention upon which his restless intellect or accidents of position threw him like a passive victim! It seemed as if not any choice of his, but some sad doom of opposition from without, forced out, as by a magnet, struggles of frantic resistance from *him*, which as gladly he would have evaded as ever victim of epilepsy yearned to evade his convulsions! Gladly he would have slept in eternal seclusion, whilst eternally the trump summoned him to battle. In storms unwillingly created by himself, he lived; in a storm, cited by the finger of God, he died.

It is affecting, — at least it is so for any one who believes in the profound sincerity of Shelley, a man (however erring) whom neither fear, nor hope, nor vanity, nor hatred ever seduced into falsehood, or even into

dissimulation, — to read the account which he gives of a revolution occurring in his own mind at school: so early did his struggles begin! It is in verse, and forms part of those beautiful stanzas addressed to his second wife, which he prefixed to "The Revolt of Islam." Five or six of these stanzas may be quoted with a certainty of pleasing many readers, whilst they throw light on the early condition of Shelley's feelings, and of his early anticipations with regard to the promises and the menaces of life.

“ Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear friend, when first
 The clouds which wrap this world, from youth did pass.
 I do remember well the hour which burst
 My spirit's sleep ; a fresh May-dawn it was,
 When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
 And wept — I knew not why ; until there rose,
 From the near school-room, voices that, alas !
 Were but one echo from a world of woes —
 The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands, and looked around —
 (But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
 Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground) —
 So without shame I spake — I will be wise,
 And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
 Such power ; for I grow weary to behold
 The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
 Without reproach or check. I then controlled
 My tears ; my heart grew calm ; and I was meek and bold.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
 Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore :
 Yet nothing, that my tyrants knew or taught,
 I cared to learn , out from that secret store
 Wrought linked armor for my soul, before
 It might walk forth to war among mankind .

Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
 Within me, till there came upon my mind
 A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
 To those who seek all sympathies in one ! —
 Such once I sought in vain ; then black despair,
 The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
 Over the world in which I moved alone : —
 Yet never found I one not false to me,
 Hard hearts and cold, like weights of icy stone
 Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
 Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.

Thou, friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
 Fell, like bright spring upon some herbless plain ;
 How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
 In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
 Of Custom⁵⁶ thou didst burst and rend in twain,
 And walk'd as free as light the clouds among,
 Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
 From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
 To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
 Although I trod the paths of high intent,
 I journeyed now ; no more companionless,
 Where solitude is like despair, I went.

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Now has descended a serenest hour ;
 And, with inconstant fortune, friends return :
 Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
 Which says — Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
 And from thy side two gentle babes are born
 To fill our home with smiles ; and thus are we
 Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn ;
 And these delights and thou have been to me
 The parents of the song I consecrate to thee."

My own attention was first drawn to Shelley by the report of his Oxford labors as a missionary in the service of infidelity. Abstracted from the absolute sincerity and simplicity which governed that boyish movement, qualities which could not be known to a stranger, or even suspected in the midst of so much extravagance, there was nothing in the Oxford reports of him to create any interest beyond that of wonder at his folly and presumption in pushing to such extremity what, naturally, all people viewed as an elaborate jest. Some curiosity, however, even at that time, must have gathered about his name; for I remember seeing, in London, a little Indian ink sketch of him in the academic costume of Oxford. The sketch tallied pretty well with a verbal description which I had heard of him in some company, namely, that he looked like an elegant and slender flower, whose head drooped from being surcharged with rain. This gave, to the chance observer, an impression that he was tainted, even in his external deportment, by some excess of sickly sentimentalism, from which I believe that, in all stages of his life, he was remarkably free. Between two and three years after this period, which was that of his expulsion from Oxford, he married a beautiful girl named Westbrook. She was respectably connected; but had not moved in a rank corresponding to Shelley's; and that accident brought him into my own neighborhood. For his family, already estranged from him, were now thoroughly irritated by what they regarded as a *mesalliance*, and withdrew, or greatly reduced, his pecuniary allowances. Such, at least, was the story current. In this

embarrassment, his wife's father made over to him an annual income of £200; and, as economy had become important, the youthful pair—both, in fact, still children—came down to the Lakes, supposing this region of Cumberland and Westmoreland to be a sequestered place, which it *was*, for eight months in the year, and also to be a cheap place—which it was *not*. Another motive to this choice arose with the then Duke of Norfolk. He was an old friend of Shelley's family, and generously refused to hear a word of the young man's errors, except where he could do anything to relieve him from their consequences. His grace possessed the beautiful estate of Gobarrow Park on Ulleswater, and other estates of greater extent in the same two counties;⁵⁷ his own agents he had directed to furnish any accommodations that might meet Shelley's views; and he had written to some gentlemen amongst his agricultural friends in Cumberland, requesting them to pay such neighborly attentions to the solitary young people as circumstances might place in their power. This bias, being impressed upon Shelley's wanderings, naturally brought him to Keswick as the most central and the largest of the little towns dispersed amongst the lakes. Southey, made aware of the interest taken in Shelley by the Duke of Norfolk, with his usual kindness immediately called upon him; and the ladies of Southey's family subsequently made an early call upon Mrs. Shelley. One of them mentioned to me as occurring in this first visit an amusing expression of the youthful matron, which, four years later, when I heard of her gloomy end, recalled with the force

of a pathetic contrast, that icy arrest then chaining up her youthful feet forever. The Shelleys had been induced by one of their new friends to take part of a house standing about half a mile out of Keswick, on the Penrith road; more, I believe, in that friend's intention for the sake of bringing them easily within his hospitalities, than for any beauty in the place. There was, however, a pretty garden attached to it. And whilst walking in this, one of the Southey party asked Mrs. Shelley if the garden had been let with *their* part of the house. "O, no," she replied, "the garden is not ours; but then, you know, the people let us run about in it whenever Percy and I are tired of sitting in the house." The *naïveté* of this expression "run about," contrasting so picturesquely with the intermitting efforts of the girlish wife at supporting a matron-like gravity, now that she was doing the honors of her house to married ladies, caused all the party to smile. And *me* it caused profoundly to sigh, four years later, when the gloomy death of this young creature, now frozen in a distant grave, threw back my remembrance upon her fawn-like playfulness, which, unconsciously to herself, the girlish phrase of *run about* so naturally betrayed.

At that time I had a cottage myself in Grasmere, just thirteen miles distant from Shelley's new abode. As he had then written nothing of any interest, I had no motive for calling upon him, except by way of showing any little attentions in my power to a brother Oxonian, and to a man of letters. These attentions indeed, he might have claimed simply in the character of a neighbor. For as men living on the coast of

Mayo or Galway are apt to consider the dwellers on the sea-board of North America in the light of next-door neighbors, divided only by a party-wall of crystal, — and what if accidentally three thousand miles thick? — on the same principle we amongst the slender population of this lake region, and wherever no ascent intervened between two parties higher than Dunmail Raise and the spurs of Helvellyn, were apt to take with each other the privileged tone of neighbors. Some neighborly advantages I might certainly have placed at Shelley's disposal — Grasmere, for instance, itself, which tempted at that time⁵⁸ by a beauty that had not been sullied; Wordsworth, who then lived in Grasmere; Elleray and Professor Wilson, nine miles further; finally, my own library, which, being rich in the wickedest of German speculations, would naturally have been more to Shelley's taste than the Spanish library of Southey.

But all these temptations were negatived for Shelley by his sudden departure. Off he went in a hurry; but *why* he went, or *whither* he went, I did not inquire; not guessing the interest which he would create in my mind, six years later, by his "Revolt of Islam." A life of Shelley, in a continental edition of his works, says that he went to Edinburgh and to Ireland. Some time after, we at the lakes heard that he was living in Wales. Apparently he had the instinct within him of his own Wandering Jew for eternal restlessness. But events were now hurrying upon his heart of hearts. Within less than ten years the whole arrear of his life was destined to revolve. Within that space, he had the whole burden of life and death

to exhaust; he had all his suffering to suffer, and all his work to work.

In about four years his first marriage was dissolved by the death of his wife. She had brought to Shelley two children. But feuds arose between them, owing to incompatible habits of mind. They parted. And it is one chief misery of a beautiful young woman, separated from her natural protector, that her desolate situation attracts and stimulates the calumnies of the malicious. Stung by these calumnies, and oppressed (as I have understood) by the loneliness of her abode, perhaps also by the delirium of fever, she threw herself into a pond, and was drowned. The name under which she first enchanted all eyes, and sported as the most playful of nymph-like girls, is now forgotten amongst men; and that other name, for a brief period her ambition and her glory, is inscribed on her gravestone as the name under which she wept and she despaired, — suffered and was buried, — turned away even from the faces of her children, and sought a hiding-place in darkness.

After this dreadful event, an anonymous life of Shelley asserts that he was for some time deranged. Pretending to no private and no circumstantial acquaintance with the case, I cannot say how that really was. There is a great difficulty besetting all sketches of lives so steeped in trouble as was Shelley's. If you have a confidential knowledge of the case, as a dear friend privileged to stand by the bed-side of raving grief, how base to use such advantages of position for the gratification of a fugitive curiosity in strangers! If you have no such knowledge, how

little qualified you must be for tracing the life with the truth of sympathy, or for judging it with the truth of charity! To me it appears, from the peace of mind which Shelley is reported afterwards to have recovered for a time, that he could not have had to reproach himself with any harshness or neglect as contributing to the shocking catastrophe. Neither ought any reproach to rest upon the memory of this first wife, as respects her relation to Shelley. Non-conformity of tastes might easily rise between two parties, without much blame to either, when one of the two had received from nature an intellect and a temperament so dangerously eccentric, and constitutionally carried, by delicacy so exquisite of organization, to eternal restlessness and irritability of nerves, if not absolutely at times to lunacy.

About three years after this tragic event, Shelley, in company with his second wife, the daughter of Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft, passed over for a third time to the Continent, from which he never came back. On Monday, July 8, 1822, being then in his twenty-ninth year, he was returning from Leghorn to his home at Lerici, in a schooner-rigged boat of his own, twenty-four feet long, eight in the beam, and drawing four feet water. His companions were only two, — Mr. Williams, formerly of the Eighth Dragoons, and Charles Vivian, an English seaman in Shelley's service. The run homewards would not have occupied more than six or eight hours. But the Gulf of Spezia is peculiarly dangerous for small craft in bad weather; and unfortunately a squall of about one hour's duration came on, the wind at the same time shifting so as to

slowly exactly in the teeth of the course to Lerici. From the interesting narrative drawn up by Mr. Trelawney, well known at that time for his connection with the Greek Revolution, it seems that for eight days the fate of the boat was unknown; and during that time couriers had been despatched along the whole line of coast between Leghorn and Nice, under anxious hopes that the voyagers might have run into some creek for shelter. But at the end of the eight days this suspense ceased. Some articles belonging to Shelley's boat had previously been washed ashore: these might have been thrown overboard; but finally the two bodies of Shelley and Mr. Williams came on shore near Via Reggio, about four miles apart. Both were in a state of advanced decomposition, but were fully identified. Vivian's body was not recovered for three weeks. From the state of the two corpses, it had become difficult to remove them; and they were therefore burned by the seaside, on funeral pyres, with the classic rites of paganism, four English gentlemen being present; — Capt. Shenley of the navy, Mr. Leigh Hunt, Lord Byron, and Mr. Trelawney. A circumstance is added by Mr. Gilfillan, which previous accounts do not mention, namely, that Shelley's heart remained unconsumed by the fire; but this is a phenomenon that has repeatedly occurred at judicial deaths by fire. The remains of Mr. Williams, when collected from the fire, were conveyed to England; but Shelley's were buried in the Protestant burying-ground at Rome, not far from a child of his own and Keats the poet. It is remarkable that Shelley, in the preface to his *Adonais*, dedicated to the memory of that young

poet, had spoken with delight of this cemetery, — as “An open space among the ruins” (of ancient Rome), “covered in winter with violets and daisies;” adding, “It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.”

I have allowed myself to abridge the circumstances as reported by Mr. Trelawney and Mr. Hunt, partly on the consideration that three-and-twenty years have passed since the event, so that a new generation has had time to grow up — not feeling the interest of *contemporaries* in Shelley, and generally, therefore, unacquainted with the case; but partly for the purpose of introducing the following comment of Mr. Gilfillan on the striking points of a catastrophe, “which robbed the world of this strange and great spirit,” and which secretly tempts men to superstitious feelings, even whilst they are denying them: —

“Everybody knows that, on the arrival of Leigh Hunt in Italy, Shelley hastened to meet him. During all the time he spent in Leghorn, he was in brilliant spirits — to him ever a sure prognostic of coming evil.” [That is, in the Scottish phrase, he was *fey*.] “On his return to his home and family, his skiff was overtaken by a fearful hurricane, and all on board perished. To a gentleman, who, at that time, was with a glass surveying the sea, the scene of his drowning assumed a very striking appearance. A great many vessels were visible, and among them one small skiff, which attracted his particular attention. Suddenly a dreadful storm, attended by thunder and columns of lightning, swept over the sea and eclipsed the prospect. When it had passed he looked again. The larger vessels

were all safe, riding upon the swell; the skiff only had gone down forever. And in that skiff was Alastor!⁵⁰ Here he had met his fate. Wert thou, O religious sea, only avenging on his head the cause of thy denied and insulted Deity? Were ye, ye elements, in your courses, commissioned to destroy him? Ah! there is no reply. The surge is silent; the elements have no voice. In the eternal councils the secret is hid of the reason of the man's death. And there, too, rests the still more tremendous secret of the character of his destiny."⁶⁰

The last remark possibly pursues the scrutiny too far; and, conscious that it tends beyond the limits of charity, Mr. Gilfillan recalls himself from the attempt to fathom the unfathomable. But undoubtedly the temptation is great, in minds the least superstitious, to read a significance, and a silent personality, in such a fate applied to such a defier of the Christian heavens. As a shepherd by his dog fetches out one of his flock from amongst five hundred, so did the holy hurricane seem to fetch out from the multitude of sails *that* one which carried him that hated the hopes of the world; and the sea, which swelled and ran down within an hour, was present at the audit. We are reminded forcibly of the sublime storm in the wilderness (as given in the fourth book of "Paradise Regained"). and the remark upon it made by the mysterious tempter —

"This tempest at this desert most was bent,
Of men at thee."

Undoubtedly, I do not understand Mr. Gilfillan, more

than myself, to read a "judgment" in this catastrophe. But there is a solemn appeal to the thoughtful, in a death of so much terrific grandeur following upon defiances of such unparalleled audacity. Æschylus acknowledged the same sense of mysterious awe, and all antiquity acknowledged it, in the story of Amphiarus.⁶¹

Shelley, it must be remembered, carried his irreligion to a point beyond all others. Of the darkest beings we are told, that they "believe and tremble;" but Shelley believed and *hated*; and his defiances were meant to show that he did *not* tremble. Yet, has he not the excuse of something like *monomania* upon this subject? I firmly believe it. But a superstition, old as the world, clings to the notion, that words of deep meaning, uttered even by lunatics or by idiots, execute themselves; and that also, when uttered in presumption, they bring round their own retributive chastisements.

On the other hand, however shocked at Shelley's obstinate revolt from all religious sympathies with his fellow-men, no man is entitled to deny the admirable qualities of his moral nature, which were as striking as his genius. Many people remarked something seraphic in the expression of his features; and something seraphic there was in his nature. No man was better qualified to have loved Christianity; and to no man, resting under the shadow of that one darkness, would Christianity have said more gladly — *talis cum sis, utinam noster esses!* Shelley would, from his earliest manhood, have sacrificed all that he possessed to any comprehensive purpose of good for the race of man

He dismissed all injuries and insults from his memory. He was the sincerest and the most truthful of human creatures. He was also the purest. If he denounced marriage as a vicious institution, *that* was but another phasis of the partial lunacy which affected him; for to no man were purity and fidelity more essential elements in his idea of real love.

I agree, therefore, heartily with Mr. Gilfillan, in protesting against the thoughtless assertion of some writer in *The Edinburgh Review* — that Shelley at all selected the story of his “Cenci” on account of its horrors, or that he has found pleasure in dwelling on those horrors. So far from it, he has retreated so entirely from the most shocking feature of the story, namely, the incestuous violence of Cenci the father, as actually to leave it doubtful whether the murder were in punishment of the last outrage committed, or in repulsion of a menace continually repeated. The true motive of the selection of such a story was — not its darkness, but (as Mr. Gilfillan, with so much penetration, perceives) the light which fights with the darkness: Shelley found the whole attraction of this dreadful tale in the angelic nature of Beatrice, as revealed in the portrait of her by Guido. Everybody who has read with understanding the “Wallenstein” of Schiller, is aware of the repose and the divine relief arising upon a background of so much darkness, such a tumult of ruffians, bloody intriguers, and assassins, from the situation of the two lovers, Max. Piccolomini and the Princess Thekla, both yearning so profoundly after peace, both so noble, both so young, and both destined to be so unhappy. The same fine relief, the same light shining in darkness

arises here from the touching beauty of Beatrice, from her noble aspirations after deliverance, from the remorse which reaches her in the midst of real innocence, from her meekness, and from the agitation of her inexpressible affliction. Even the murder, even the parricide, though proceeding from herself, do but deepen that background of darkness, which throws into fuller revelation the glory of that suffering face immortalized by Guido.

Something of a similar effect arises to myself when reviewing the general abstract of Shelley's life, — so brief, so full of agitation, so full of strife. When one thinks of the early misery which he suffered, and of the insolent infidelity which, being yet so young, he wooed with a lover's passion, then the darkness of midnight begins to form a deep, impenetrable background, upon which the phantasmagoria of all that is to come may arrange itself in troubled phosphoric streams, and in sweeping processions of woe. Yet, again, when one recurs to his gracious nature, his fearlessness, his truth, his purity from all fleshliness of appetite, his freedom from vanity, his diffusive love and tenderness, — suddenly, out of the darkness, reveals itself a morning of May; forests and thickets of roses advance to the foreground; from the midst of them looks out "the eternal⁰² child," cleansed from his sorrow, radiant with joy, having power given him to forget the misery which he suffered, power given him to forget the misery which he caused, and leaning with his heart upon that dove-like faith against which his erring intellect had rebelled.

JOHN KEATS.

MR. GILFILLAN* introduces this section with a discussion upon the constitutional peculiarities ascribed to men of genius; such as nervousness of temperament, idleness, vanity, irritability, and other disagreeable tendencies ending in *ty* or in *ness*; one of the *ties* being "poverty;" which disease is at least not amongst those morbidly cherished by the patients. All that can be asked from the most penitent man of genius is, that he should humbly confess his own besetting infirmities, and endeavor to hate them; and, as respects this one infirmity at least, I never heard of any man (however eccentric in genius) who did otherwise. But what special relation has such a preface to Keats? His whole article occupies twelve pages; and six of these are allotted to this preliminary discussion, which perhaps equally concerns every other man in the household of literature. Mr. Gilfillan seems to have been acting here on celebrated precedents. The "*Omnes homines qui sese student præstare æteris animalibus*" has long been "smoked" by a wicked posterity as an old hack of Sallust's fitted on with paste and scissors to the Catilinarian conspiracy

* "Gallery of Literary Portraits."

Cicero candidly admits that he kept in his writing-desk an assortment of movable prefaces, beautifully fitted (by means of avoiding all questions but "the general question") for parading, *en grand costume*, before any conceivable book. And Coleridge, in his early days, used the image of a man's "sleeping under a manchineel tree," alternately with the case of Alexander's killing his friend Clitus, as resources for illustration which Providence had bountifully made inexhaustible in their applications. No emergency could by possibility arise to puzzle the poet, or the orator, but one of these similes (please Heaven!) should be made to meet it. So long as the manchineel continued to blister with poisonous dews those who confided in its shelter, so long as Niebuhr should kindly forbear to prove that Alexander of Macedon was a hoax, and his friend Clitus a myth, so long was Samuel Taylor Coleridge fixed and obdurate in his determination that one or other of these images should come upon duty whenever, as a youthful writer, he found himself on the brink of insolvency.

But it is less the generality of this preface, or even its disproportion, which fixes the eye, than the questionableness of its particular statements. In that part which reviews the *idleness* of authors, Horace is given up as too notoriously indolent; the thing, it seems, is past denying; but "not so Lucretius." Indeed! and how shall this be brought to proof? Perhaps the reader has heard of that barbarian prince, who sent to Europe for a large map of the world accompanied by the best of English razors; and the clever use which he made of his importation was, that, first

cutting out with exquisite accuracy the whole ring-fence of his own dominions, and then doing the same office, with the same equity (barbarous or barberous) for the dominions of a hostile neighbor, next he proceeded to weigh off the rival segments against each other in a pair of gold scales; after which, of course, he arrived at a satisfactory algebraic equation between himself and his enemy. Now, upon this principle of comparison, if we should take any *common* edition (as the *Delphin* or the *Variorum*) of Horace and Lucretius, strictly shaving away all notes, prefaces, editorial absurdities, &c., all "flotsom" and "jetsom" that may have gathered like barnacles about the two weather-beaten hulks; in that case we should have the two old files undressed, and *in puris naturalibus*; they would be prepared for being weighed; and, going to the nearest grocer's, we might then settle the point at once, as to which of the two had been the idler man. I back Horace for *my* part; and it is my private opinion that, in the case of a quarto edition, the grocer would have to throw at least a two-ounce weight into the scale of Lucretius, before he could be made to draw against the other. Yet, after all, this would only be a collation of quantity against quantity; whilst, upon a second collation of quality against quality (I do not mean quality as regards the final merit of the composition, but quality as regards the difficulties in the process of composition), the difference in amount of labor would appear to be as between the weaving of a blanket and the weaving of an exquisite cambric. The *curiosa felicitas* of Horace in his lyric compositions, the elaborate delicacy of workmanship

in his thoughts and in his style, argue a scale of labor that, as against any equal number of lines in Lucretius, would measure itself by months against days. There are single odes in Horace that must have cost him a six weeks' seclusion from the wickedness of Rome. Do I then question the extraordinary power of Lucretius? On the contrary, I admire him as the first of demoniacs; the frenzy of an earth-born or a hell-born inspiration; divinity of stormy music sweeping round us in eddies, in order to prove that for us there could be nothing divine; the grandeur of a prophet's voice rising in angry gusts, by way of convincing us that prophets were swindlers; oracular scorn of oracles; frantic efforts, such as might seem reasonable in one who was scaling the heavens, for the purpose of degrading all things, making man to be the most abject of necessities as regarded his causes, to be the blindest of accidents as regarded his expectations; these fierce antinomies expose a mode of insanity, but of an insanity affecting a sublime intellect.⁶³ One would suppose him partially mad by the savagery of his headlong manner. And most people who read Lucretius at all, are aware of the traditional story current in Rome, that he did actually write in a delirious state; not under any figurative disturbance of brain, but under a real physical disturbance caused by philters administered to him without his own knowledge. But this kind of supernatural *afflatus* did not deliver into words and metre by lingering oscillations, and through processes of self-correction; it threw itself forward, and precipitated its own utterance, with the hurrying and bounding of a cataract. It was an

æstrum, a rapture, the bounding of a mœnad, by which the muse of Lucretius lived and moved. So much is known by the impression about him current among his contemporaries: so much is evident in the characteristic manner of his poem, if all anecdotes had perished. And, upon the whole, let the proportions of power between Horace and Lucretius be what they may, the proportions of labor are absolutely incommensurable: in Horace the labor was *directly* as the power, in Lucretius *inversely* as the power. Whatsoever in Horace was best—had been obtained by *most* labor; whatsoever in Lucretius was best—by *least*. In Horace, the exquisite skill coöperated with the exquisite nature; in Lucretius, the powerful nature disdained the skill, which, indeed, would not have been applicable to *his* theme, or to *his* treatment of it, and triumphed by means of mere precipitation of volume, and of headlong fury.

Another paradox of Mr. Gilfillan's, under this head, is, that he classes Dr. Johnson as indolent; and it is the more startling, because he does not utter it as a careless opinion upon which he might have been thrown by inconsideration, but as a concession extorted from him reluctantly; he had sought to evade it, but could not. Now, that Dr. Johnson had a morbid predisposition to decline labor from his scrofulous habit of body,⁶⁴ is probable. The question for us however, is, not what nature prompted him to do, but what he did. If he had an extra difficulty to fight with in attempting to labor, the more was his merit in the known result, that he *did* fight with that difficulty, and that he conquered it. This is undeniable

And the attempt to deny it presents itself in a comic shape, when one imagines some ancient shelf in a library, that has groaned for nearly a century under the weight of the doctor's works, demanding, "How say you? Is this Sam Johnson, whose Dictionary alone is a load for a camel, one of those authors whom you call idle? Then Heaven preserve us poor oppressed book-shelves from such as you will consider active." George III., in a compliment as happily turned as if it had proceeded from Louis XIV., expressed his opinion upon this question of the doctor's industry by saying, that he also should join in thinking Johnson too voluminous a contributor to literature, were it not for the extraordinary merit of his contributions. Now it would be an odd way of turning the royal praise into a reproach, if we should say: "Sam, had you been a pretty good writer, we, your countrymen, should have held you to be also an industrious writer; but, because you are a *very* good writer, therefore we pronounce you a lazy vagabond."

Upon other points in this discussion there is some room to differ with Mr. Gilfillan. For instance, with respect to the question of the comparative happiness enjoyed by men of genius, it is not necessary to argue, nor does it seem possible to prove, even in the case of any one individual poet, that, on the whole, he was either more happy or less happy than the average mass of his fellow-men; far less could this be argued as to the whole class of poets. What seems *really* open to proof, is, that men of genius have a larger *capacity* of happiness, which capacity, both from within and from without, may be defeated in ten thou

sand ways. This seems involved in the very word *genius*. For, after all the pretended and hollow attempts to distinguish genius from talent, I shall continue to think (what heretofore I have explained) that no distinction in the case is tenable for a moment but this; namely that genius is that mode of intellectual power which moves in alliance with the *genial* nature, that is, with the capacities of pleasure and pain; whereas talent has no vestige of such an alliance, and is perfectly independent of all human sensibilities. Consequently, genius is a voice or breathing that represents the *total* nature of man; whilst, on the contrary, talent represents only a single function of that nature. Genius is the language which interprets the synthesis of the human spirit with the human intellect, each acting through the other; whilst talent speaks only from the insulated 'intellect. And hence also it is that, besides its relation to suffering and enjoyment, genius always implies a deeper relation to virtue and vice; whereas talent has no shadow of a relation to *moral* qualities, any more than it has to vital sensibilities. A man of the highest talent is often obtuse and below the ordinary standard of men in his feelings; but no man of genius can unyoke himself from the society of moral perceptions that are brighter, and sensibilities that are more tremulous, than those of men in general.

As to the examples⁶⁵ by which Mr. Gilfillan supports his prevailing views, they will be construed by any ten thousand men in ten thousand separate modes. The objections are so endless that it would be abusing the reader's time to urge them; especially as every man of the ten thousand will be wrong, and will also be

right, in all varieties of proportion. Two only it may be useful to notice as examples, involving some degree of error, namely, Addison and Homer. As to the first, the error, if an error, is one of fact only. Lord Byron had said of Addison, that he "died drunk." This seems to Mr. Gilfillan a "horrible statement;" for which he supposes that no authority can exist but "a rumor circulated by an inveterate gossip," meaning Horace Walpole. But gossips usually go upon some foundation, broad or narrow; and, until the rumor had been authentically put down, Mr. Gilfillan should not have pronounced it a "malignant calumny." Me this story caused to laugh exceedingly; not at Addison, whose fine genius extorts pity and tenderness towards his infirmities; but at the characteristic misanthropy of Lord Byron, who chuckles as he would do over a glass of nectar, on this opportunity for confronting the old solemn legend about Addison's sending for his step-son, Lord Warwick, to witness the peaceful death of a Christian, with so rich a story as this, that he, the said Christian, "died drunk." Supposing that he *did*, the mere physical fact of inebriation, in a stage of debility where so small an excess of stimulating liquor (though given medicinally) sometimes causes such an appearance, would not infer the moral blame of drunkenness; and if such a thing were ever said by any person *present* at the bed-side, I should feel next to certain that it was said in that spirit of exaggeration to which most men are tempted by circumstances unusually fitted to impress a startling picturesqueness upon the statement. But, without insisting upon Lord Byron's way of putting the case, I believe it is generally understood that, latterly,

Addison gave way to habits of intemperance. He suffered, not only from his wife's dissatisfied temper,⁶⁶ but also (and probably much more) from *ennui*. He did not walk one mile a day, and he ought to have walked ten. Dyspepsia was, no doubt, the true ground of his unhappiness; and he had nothing to hope for. To remedy these evils, I have always understood that every day (and especially towards night) he drank too much of that French liquor, which, calling itself *water of life*, nine times in ten proves the water of death. He lived latterly at Kensington, namely, in Holland House, the well-known residence of the late Lord Holland; and the tradition attached to the gallery in that house, is, that duly as the sun drew near to setting, on two tables, one at each end of the long *ambulachrum*, the right honorable Joseph placed, or caused to be placed, two tumblers of brandy, somewhat diluted with water; and those, the said vessels, then and there did alternately to the lips of him, the aforesaid Joseph, diligently apply, walking to and fro during the process of exhaustion, and dividing his attention between the two poles, arctic and antartic, of his evening *diavlos*, with the impartiality to be expected from a member of the Privy Council. How often the two "blessed bears," northern and southern, were replenished, entered into no *affidavit* that ever reached *me*. But so much I have always understood, that in the gallery of Holland House, the ex-secretary of state caught a decided hiccup, which never afterwards subsided. In all this there would have been little to shock people, had it not been for the sycophancy which ascribed to Addison a religious reputation such as he neither merited nor wished to claim

But one penal reaction of mendacious adulation, for him who is weak enough to accept it, must ever be to impose restraints upon his own conduct, which otherwise he would have been free to decline. How lightly would Sir Roger de Coverley have thought of a little sotting in any honest gentleman of right politics! And Addison would not, in that age, and as to that point, have carried his scrupulosity higher than his own Sir Roger. But such knaves as he who had complimented Addison with the praise of having written "no line which, dying, he could wish to blot," whereas, in fact, Addison started in life by publishing a translation of Petronius Arbiter, had painfully coerced his free agency. This knave, I very much fear, was Tickell the first; and the result of his knavery was, to win for Addison a disagreeable sanctimonious reputation that was, first, founded in lies; second, that painfully limited Addison's free agency; and, thirdly, that prepared insults to his memory, since it pointed a censorious eye upon those things, viewed as the acts of a demure pretender to piety, which would else have passed without notice as the most venial of frailties in a layman.

Something I had to say also upon Homer, who mingles amongst the examples cited by Mr. Gilfillan, of apparent happiness connected with genius. But, for want of room,⁶⁷ I forbear to go further, than to lodge my protest against imputing to Homer as any personal merit, what belongs altogether to the stage of society in which he lived. "They," says Mr. Gilfillan, speaking of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," "are the wealthiest of works. There are in them no sullenness, no querulous complaint, not one personal allusion." No; but

how *could* there have been? Subjective poetry had not an existence in those days. Not only the powers for introverting the eye upon the *spectator*, as himself, the *spectaculum*, were then undeveloped and inconceivable, but the sympathies did not exist to which such an innovation could have appealed. Besides, and partly from the same cause, even as objects, the human feelings and affections were too broadly and grossly distinguished, had not reached even the infancy of that stage in which the passions begin their process of intermodification, nor *could* have reached it, from the simplicity of social life, as well as from the barbarism of the Greek religion. The author of the "Iliad," or even of the "Odyssey" (though doubtless a product of a later period), could not have been "unhealthy," or "sullen," or "querulous," from any cause, except *psora* or *elephantiasis*, or scarcity of beef, or similar afflictions with which it is quite impossible to inoculate poetry. The metrical romances of the middle ages have the same shivering character of starvation, as to the inner life of man; and, if *that* constitutes a meritorious distinction, no man ought to be excused for wanting what it is so easy to obtain by simple neglect of culture. On the same principle, a cannibal, if truculently indiscriminate in his horrid diet, might win sentimental praises for his temperance; others were picking and choosing, miserable epicures! but he, the saint upon earth, cared not what he ate; any joint satisfied *his* moderate desires; shoulder of man, leg of child; anything, in fact, that was nearest at hand, so long as it was good, wholesome human flesh; and the more plainly dressed the better.

But these topics, so various and so fruitful, I touch

only because they are introduced, amongst many others, by Mr. Gilfillan. Separately viewed, some of these would be more attractive than any merely personal interest connected with Keats. His biography, stripped of its false coloring, offers little to win attention; for he was not the victim of any systematic malignity, as has been represented. He met, as I have understood, with unusual kindness from his liberal publishers, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey. He met with unusual severity from a cynical reviewer, the late Mr. Gifford, then editor of *The Quarterly Review*. The story ran, that this article of Mr. G.'s had killed Keats; upon which, with natural astonishment, Lord Byron thus commented, in the 11th canto of *Don Juan*:—

“ John Keats who was killed off by one critique,
 Just as he really promised something great,
 If not intelligible,— without Greek,
 Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
 Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
 Poor fellow ! his was an untoward fate :
 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,⁶⁸
 Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article.”

Strange, indeed ! and the friends who honor Keats' memory, should not lend themselves to a story so degrading. He died, I believe, of pulmonary consumption; and would have died of it, probably, under any circumstances of prosperity as a poet. Doubtless, in a condition of languishing decay, slight causes of irritation act powerfully. But it is hardly conceivable that one ebullition of splenetic bad feeling, in a case so proverbially open to revision as the pretensions of a poet, could have overthrown any masculine life, unless where that life

had already been *irrecoverably* undermined by sickness. As a man, and viewed in relation to social objects Keats was nothing. It was as mere an affectation when he talked with apparent zeal of liberty, or human rights, or human prospects, as is the hollow enthusiasm which many people profess for music, or most poets for external nature. For these things Keats fancied that he cared; but in reality he cared not at all. Upon them, or any of their aspects, he had thought too little, and too indeterminately, to feel for them as personal concerns. Whereas Shelley, from his earliest days, was mastered and shaken by the great moving realities of life, as a prophet is by the burden of wrath or of promise which he has been commissioned to reveal. Had there been no such thing as literature, Keats would have dwindled into a cipher. Shelley, in the same event, would hardly have lost one plume from his crest. It is in relation to literature, and to the boundless questions as to the true and the false arising out of literature and poetry, that Keats challenges a fluctuating interest; sometimes an interest of strong disgust, sometimes of deep admiration. There is not, I believe, a case on record throughout European literature, where feelings so repulsive of each other have centred in the same individual. The very midsummer madness of affectation, of false vapory sentiment, and of fantastic effeminacy, seemed to me combined in Keats' *Endymion*, when I first saw it near the close of 1821. The Italian poet, Marino, had been reputed the greatest master of gossamery affectation in Europe. But *his* conceits showed the palest of rosy blushes by the side of Keats' bloody crimson. Naturally, I was discouraged from looking further. But

about a week later, by pure accident, my eye fell upon his *Hyperion*. The first feeling was that of incredulity that the two poems could, under change of circumstances or lapse of time, have emanated from the same mind. The *Endymion* displays absolutely the most shocking revolt against good sense and just feeling, that all literature does now, or ever *can* furnish. The *Hyperion*, as Mr. Gilfillan truly says, "is the greatest of poetical torsos." The first belongs essentially to the vilest collections of wax-work filigree, or gilt gingerbread. The other presents the majesty, the austere beauty, and the simplicity of Grecian temples enriched with Grecian sculpture.

We have in this country a word, namely, the word *Folly*, which has a technical appropriation to the case of fantastic buildings. Any building is called "a folly,"⁶⁹ which mimics purposes incapable of being realized, and makes a promise to the eye which it cannot keep to the experience. The most impressive illustration of this idea, which modern times have seen, was, undoubtedly, the ice-palace of the Empress Elizabeth⁷⁰ —

"That most magnificent and mighty freak,"

which, about eighty years ago, was called up from the depths of winter by

"The imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ."

Winter and the Czarina were, in this architecture, fellow-laborers. She, by her servants, furnished the blocks of ice, hewed them, dressed them, laid them: winter furnished the cement, by freezing them together. The palace has long melted back into water; and the poet

who described it best, namely, Cowper, is not so much read in this age, except by the religious. It will, therefore, be a sort of resurrection for both the palace and the poet, if I cite his description of this gorgeous folly. It is a passage in which Cowper assumes so much of a Miltonic tone, that, of the two, it is better to have read his lasting description, than to have seen, with bodily eyes the fleeting reality. The poet is apostrophizing the Empress Elizabeth.

——— “ No forest fell,
When *thou* wouldst build : no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls : but thou didst hew the floods
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.

.

Silently as a dream the fabric rose :
No sound of hammer or of saw was there :
Ice upon ice, the well adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues.
Illumined every side ; a watery light
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new-risen :———

.

——— Nor wanted aught within
That royal residence might well befit
For grandeur or for use. Long weavy wreaths
Of flowers, that feared no enemy but warmth,
Blushed on the panels. Mirror needed none,
Where all was vitreous : but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What *seemed* at least commodious seat) were *there* ;
Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all,

And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again."

The poet concludes by viewing the whole as an unintentional stroke of satire by the Czarina,

——— "On her own estate,
On human grandeur, and the courts of kings.
'T was transient in its nature, as in show
'T was durable ; as worthless, as it seemed
Intrinsically precious : to the foot
Traacherous and false, — it smiled, and it was cold."

Looking at this imperial plaything of ice in the month of March, and recollecting that in May all its crystal arcades would be weeping away into vernal brooks, one would have been disposed to mourn over a beauty so frail, and to marvel at a frailty so elaborate. Yet still there was some proportion observed : the saloons were limited in number, though *not* limited in splendor. It was a *petit Trianon*. But what if, like Versailles this glittering bauble, to which all the science of Europe could not have secured a passport into June, had contained six thousand separate rooms ? A "folly" on so gigantic a scale would have moved every man to indignation. For all that could be had, the beauty to the eye, and the gratification to the fancy, in seeing water tortured into every form of solidity, resulted from two or three suites of rooms, as fully as from a thousand.

Now, such a folly, as *would* have been the Czarina's, if executed upon the scale of Versailles, or of the new palace at St. Petersburg, *was* the Endymion : a gigantic edifice (for its tortuous engimas of thought multiplied every line of the four thousand into fifty) reared upon a

basis slighter and less apprehensible than moonshine. As reasonably, and as hopefully in regard to human sympathies, might a man undertake an epic poem upon the loves of two butterflies. The modes of existence in the two parties to the love-fable of the Endymion, their relations to each other and to us, their prospects finally, and the obstacles to the *instant* realization of these prospects, — all these things are more vague and incomprehensible than the reveries of an oyster. Still the unhappy subject, and its unhappy expansion, must be laid to the account of childish years and childish inexperience. But there is another fault in Keats, of the first magnitude, which youth does not palliate, which youth even aggravates. This lies in the most shocking abuse of his mother-tongue. If there is one thing in this world that, next after the flag of his country and its spotless honor, should be wholly in the eyes of a young poet, — it is the *language* of his country. He should spend the third part of his life in studying this language, and cultivating its total resources. He should be willing to pluck out his right eye, or to circumnavigate the globe, if by such a sacrifice, if by such an exertion, he could attain to greater purity, precision, compass, or idiomatic energy of diction. This if he were even a Kalmuck Tartar, who by the way *has* the good feeling and patriotism to pride himself upon his beastly language.⁷¹ But Keats was an Englishman; Keats had the honor to speak the language of Chaucer, Shakspeare, Bacon Milton, Newton. The more awful was the obligation of his allegiance. And yet upon this mother tongue upon this English language, has Keats trampled as with the hoofs of a buffalo. With its syntax, with its pros

ody, with its idiom, he has played such fantastic tricks as could enter only into the heart of a barbarian, and for which only the anarchy of Chaos could furnish a forgiving audience. Verily it required the *Hyperion* to weigh against the deep treason of these unparalleled offences.

WILLIAM GODWIN.*

It is no duty of a notice so cursory to discuss Mr. Godwin as a philosopher. Mr. Gilfillan admits that in this character he did not earn much popularity by any absolute originality; and of such popularity as he may have snatched surreptitiously without it, clearly all must have long since exhaled before it could be possible for "a respectable person" to demand of Mr. Gilfillan "*Who's Godwin?*" A question which Mr. Gilfillan justly thinks it possible that 'some readers,' of the present day, November, 1845, may repeat. That is, we must presume, *not* who is Godwin the novelist? but who is Godwin the political philosopher? In that character he is now forgotten. And yet in *that* he carried one single shock into the bosom of English society, fearful but momentary, like that from the electric blow of the gymnotus; or, perhaps, the intensity of the brief panic which, fifty years ago, he impressed on the public mind, may be more adequately expressed by the case of a ship in the middle ocean suddenly scraping, with her keel, a rag-

* "A Gallery of Literary Portraits." By George Gilfillan.

ged rock, hanging for one moment, as if impaled upon the teeth of the dreadful *sierra*, then, by the mere *impetus* of her mighty sails, grinding audibly to powder the fangs of this accursed submarine harrow, leaping into deep water again, and causing the panic of ruin to be simultaneous with the deep sense of deliverance. In the *quarto* (that is, the original) edition of his "Political Justice," Mr. Godwin advanced against thrones and dominations, powers and principalities, with the air of some Titan slinger or monarchist from Thebes and Troy, saying, "Come hither, ye wretches, that I may give your flesh to the fowls of the air." But, in the second, or *octavo* edition, — and under what motive has never been explained, — he recoiled, absolutely, from the sound himself had made: everybody else was appalled by the fury of the challenge; and, through the strangest of accidents, Mr. Godwin also was appalled. The second edition, as regards principles, is not a recast, but absolutely a travesty of the first: nay, it is all but a palinode. In this collapse of a tense excitement, I myself find the true reason for the utter extinction of the "Political Justice," and of its author considered as a philosopher. Subsequently, he came forward as a philosophical speculator, in "The Enquirer," and elsewhere; but here it was always some minor question which he raised, or some mixed question, rather allied to philosophy than philosophical. As regarded the main creative *nisus* of his philosophy, it remained undeniable that, in relation to the hostility of the world, he was like one who, in some piratical ship, should drop his anchor before Portsmouth, — should defy the navies of

England to come out and fight, and then, whilst a thousand vessels were contending for the preference in blowing him out of the seas, should suddenly slip his cables and run.

But it is as a novelist, not as a political theorist, that Mr. Gilfillan values Godwin; and specially for his novel of "Caleb Williams." Now, if this were the eccentric judgment of one unsupported man, however able, and had received no countenance at all from others, it might be injudicious to detain the reader upon it. It happens, however, that other men of talent have raised "Caleb Williams" to a station in the first rank of novels; whilst many more, amongst whom I am compelled to class myself, can see in it no merit of any kind. A schism, which is really perplexing, exists in this particular case; and, that the reader may judge for himself, I will state the outline of the plot, out of which 't is that the whole interest must be supposed to grow; for the characters are nothing, being mere generalities, and very slightly developed. Thirty-five years it is since I read the book; but the nakedness of the incidents makes them easily rememberable. — Falkland, who passes for a man of a high-minded and delicate honor, but is, in fact, distinguished only by acute sensibility to the opinion of the world, receives a dreadful insult in a most public situation. It is, indeed, more than an insult, being the most brutal of outrages. In a ball-room, where the local gentry and his neighbors are assembled, he is knocked down, kicked, dragged along the floor, by a ruffian squire, named Tyrrel. It is vain to resist; he himself is slightly built, and his antagonist is a powerful man. In these circumstances

and under the eyes of all the ladies in the county witnessing every step of his humiliation, no man could severely have blamed him, nor would English law have severely punished him, if, in the frenzy of his agitation, he had seized a poker and laid his assailant dead upon the spot. Such allowance does the natural feeling of men, such allowance does the sternness of the judgment-seat, make for human infirmity when tried to extremity by devilish provocation. But Falkland does not avenge himself thus: he goes out, makes his little arrangements, and, at a later hour of the night, he comes, by surprise, upon Tyrrel, and murders him in the darkness. Here is the first vice in the story. With any gleam of generosity in his nature, no man in pursuit of vengeance would have found it in such a catastrophe. That an enemy should die by apoplexy, or by lightning, would be no gratification of wrath to an impassioned pursuer: to make it a retribution for *him*, he himself must be associated to the catastrophe in the consciousness of his victim. Falkland for some time evades or tramples on detection. But his evil genius at last appears in the shape of Caleb Williams; and the agency through which Mr. Caleb accomplishes his mission is not that of any grand passion, but of vile eavesdropping inquisitiveness. Mr. Falkland had hired him as an amanuensis, and in that character Caleb had occasion to observe that some painful remembrance weighed upon his master's mind; and that something or other — documents or personal memorials connected with this remembrance — were deposited in a trunk visited at intervals by Falkland. But of what nature could these

memorials be? Surely Mr. Falkland would not keep in brandy the gory head of Tyrrel; and anything short of *that* could not proclaim any murder at all, much less the particular murder. Strictly speaking nothing *could* be in the trunk, of a nature to connect Falkland with the murder more closely than the circumstances had already connected him; and those circumstances, as we know, had been insufficient. It puzzles one, therefore, to imagine any evidence which the trunk could yield, unless there were secreted within it some known personal property of Tyrrel's; in which case the aspiring Falkland had committed a larceny as well as murder. Caleb, meantime, wastes no labor in hypothetic reasonings, but resolves to have ocular satisfaction in the matter. An opportunity offers; an alarm of fire is given in the day-time; and whilst Mr. Falkland, with his people, is employed on the lawn manning the buckets, Caleb skulks off to the trunk; feeling, probably, that his first duty was to himself, by extinguishing the burning fire of curiosity in his own heart, after which there might be time enough for his second duty, of assisting to extinguish the fire in his master's mansion. Falkland, however, misses the absentee. To pursue him, to collar him, and, we may hope, to kick him, are the work of a moment. Had Caleb found time for accomplishing his inquest? I really forget; but no matter. Either now, or at some luckier hour, he does so: he becomes master of Falkland's secret—consequently, as both fancy, of Falkland's life. At this point commences a flight of Caleb, and a chasing of Falkland, in order to watch his motions, which forms the most spirited part

of the story. Mr. Godwin tells us that he derived this situation, the continual flight and continual pursuit, from a South American tradition of some Spanish vengeance. Always the Spaniard was riding *in* to any given town on the road, when his destined victim was riding *out* at the other end; so that the relations of "whereabouts" were never for a moment lost: the trail was perfect. Now, this might be possible in certain countries; but in England!—heavens! could not Caleb double upon his master, or dodge round a gate (like Falkland when he murdered Mr. Tyrrel), or take a headlong plunge into London, where the scent might have lain cold for forty years? * Other accidents by thousands would interrupt the chase. On the hundredth day, for instance, after the flying parties had become well known on the road, Mr. Falkland would drive furiously up to some King's Head or White Lion, putting his one question to the waiter, "Where's Caleb?" And the waiter would reply, "Where's Mr. Caleb, did you say, sir? Why, he went off at five by the Highflyer, booked inside the whole way to Doncaster; and Mr. Caleb is now, sir, precisely forty-five miles ahead." Then would Falkland furiously demand "four horses on;" and then would the waiter plead a contested election in excuse for having no horses at all. Really, for dramatic

* "Forty years:" so long, according to my recollection of Boswell, did Dr. Johnson walk about London before he met an old Derbyshire friend, who also had been walking about London with the same punctual regularity for every day of the same forty years. The *nodes* of intersection did not come round sooner.

effect, it is a pity that the tale were not translated forward to the days of railroads. Sublime would look the fiery pursuit, and the panic-stricken flight, when racing from Fleetwood to Liverpool, to Birmingham, to London; then smoking along the Great Western, where Mr. Caleb's forty-five miles ahead would avail him little, to Bristol, to Exeter; thence doubling back upon London, like the steam leg in Mr. H. G. Bell's admirable story.

But, after all, what was the object, and what the result of all this racing? Once I saw two young men facing each other upon a high road, but at a furlong's distance, and playing upon the foolish terrors of a young woman by continually heading her back from one to the other, as alternately she approached towards either. Signals of some dreadful danger in the north being made by the northern man, back the poor girl flew towards the southern, who, in *his* turn, threw out pantomimic warnings of an equal danger to the south. And thus, like a tennis-ball, the simple creature kept rebounding from one to the other, until she could move no further through sheer fatigue; and then first the question occurred to her, What was it that she had been running from? The same question seems to have struck at last upon the obtuse mind of Mr. Caleb; it was quite as easy to play the part of hunter, as that of hunted game, and likely to be cheaper. He turns therefore sharp round upon his master, who in *his* turn is disposed to fly, when suddenly the sport is brought to a dead lock by a constable, who tells the murdering squire that he is "wanted." Caleb has lodged informations; all parties meet for a final "reunion" before the

nagistrate; Mr. Falkland, oddly enough, regards himself in the light of an ill-used man; which theory of the case, even more oddly, seems to be adopted by Mr. Gilfillan; but, for all that he can say, Mr. Falkland is fully committed; and as laws were made for every degree, it is plain that Mr. Falkland (however much of a pattern-man) is in some danger of swinging. But the catastrophe is intercepted; a novelist may raise his hero to the peerage; he may even confer the garter upon him; but it shocks against usage and courtesy that he should hang him. The circulating libraries would rise in mutiny, if he did. And therefore it is satisfactory to believe (for all along I speak from memory), that Mr. Falkland reprieves himself from the gallows by dying of exhaustion from his travels.

Such is the fable of "Caleb Williams," upon which, by the way, is built, I think, Colman's drama of "The Iron Chest." I have thought it worth the trouble (whether for the reader, or for myself), of a flying abstract; and chiefly with a view to the strange collision of opinions as to the merit of the work; some, as I have said, exalting it to the highest class of novels, others depressing it below the lowest of those which achieve any notoriety. They who vote against it are in a large majority. The Germans, whose literature offers a free port to all the eccentricities of the earth have never welcomed "Caleb Williams." Chenier, the ruling *litterateur* of Paris, in the days of Napoleon, when reviewing the literature of his own day, dismisses Caleb contemptuously as coarse and vulgar. It is not therefore to the German taste; it is not to the

French. And as to our own country, Mr. Gilfillan is undoubtedly wrong in supposing that it "is in every circulating library, and needs, more frequently than almost any novel, to be replaced." If this were so, in presence of the immortal novels which for one hundred and fifty years have been gathering into the garners of our English literature, I should look next to see the race of men returning from venison and wheat to their primitive diet of acorns. But I believe that the number of editions yet published, would at once discredit this account of the book's popularity. Neither is it likely, *à priori*, that such a popularity could arise even for a moment. The interest from secret and vindictive murder, though coarse, is undoubtedly deep. What would make us thrill in real life, — the case for instance of a neighbor lying under the suspicion of such a murder, — would make us thrill in a novel. But then it must be managed with art, and covered with mystery. For a long time it must continue doubtful, both as to the fact, and the circumstances, and the motive. Whereas, in the case of Mr. Falkland, there is little mystery of any kind; not much, and only for a short time, to Caleb; and none at all to the reader, who could have relieved the curiosity of Mr. Caleb from the first, if he were placed in communication with him.

Differing so much from Mr. Gilfillan, as to the effectiveness of the novel, I am only the more impressed with the eloquent images and expressions by which he has conveyed his own sense of its power. Power there must be, though many of us cannot discern it, to react upon us, through impressions so

powerful in other minds. Some of Mr. Gilfillan's impressions, as they are clothed in striking images by himself, I will here quote:—“His,” Godwin's “heat is never that of the sun with all his beams around him; but of the round, rayless orb seen shining from the summit of Mont Blanc, still and stripped in the black ether. He has more passion than imagination. And even his passion he has learned more by sympathy than by personal feeling. And, amid his most tempestuous scenes, you see the calm and stern eye of philosophic analysis looking on. His imagery is not copious, nor always original; but its sparseness is its strength—the flash comes sudden as the lightning. No preparatory flourish, or preliminary sound; no sheets of useless splendor: each figure is a fork of fire, which strikes and needs no second blow. Nay, often his images are singularly common-place, and you wonder how they move you so, till you resolve this into the power of the hand which jaculates its own energy in *them*.” And again, “His novels resemble the paintings of John Martin, being a gallery, nay a world, in themselves. In both, monotony and mannerism are incessant; but the monotony is that of the sounding deep, the mannerism that of the thunderbolts of heaven. Martin might append to his one continual flash of lightning, which is present in all his pictures,—now to reveal a deluge, now to garland the brow of a fiend—now to rend the veil of a temple, and now to guide the invaders through the breach of a city,—the words, *John Martin, his mark*. Godwin's novels are not less terribly distinguished to those who understand

their cipher— the deep scar of misery branded upon the brow of the ‘victim of society.’”

And as to the earliest of these novels, the “Caleb Williams,” he says, “There is about it a stronger suction and swell of interest than in any novel we know, with the exception of one or two of Sir Walter’s. You are in it ere you are aware. You put your hand playfully into a child’s, and are surprised to find it held in the grasp of a giant. It becomes a fascination. Struggle you may, and kick, but he holds you by his glittering eye.” In reference, again, to “St. Leon,” the next most popular of Godwin’s novels, there is a splendid passage upon the glory and pretensions of the ancient alchemist, in the infancy of scientific chemistry. It rescues the character from vulgarity, and displays it idealized as sometimes, perhaps, it must have been. I am sorry that it is too long for extracting; but, in compensation to the reader, I quote two very picturesque sentences, describing what, to Mr. Gilfillan, appears the quality of Godwin’s style:— “It is a smooth succession of short and simple sentences, each clear as crystal, and none ever distracting the attention from the subject to its own construction. It is a style in which you cannot explain how the total effect rises out of the individual parts, and which is forgotten as entirely during perusal as in the pane of glass through which you gaze at a comet or a star.” Elsewhere, and limiting his remark to the style of the “Caleb Williams,” he says finely:— “The writing, though far from elegant or finished, has in parts the rude power of those sentences which

criminals, martyrs, and maniacs, scrawl upon their walls or windows in the eloquence of desperation."*

These things perplex me. The possibility that any individual in the minority can have regarded Godwin with such an eye, seems to argue that we of the majority must be wrong. Deep impressions seem to justify themselves. *We* may have failed to perceive things which *are* in the object; but it is not so easy for others to perceive things which are *not*; or, at least, hardly in a case like this, where (though a minority) these "others" still exist in number sufficient to check and to confirm each other. On the other hand, Godwin's name seems sinking out of remembrance; and he is remembered less by the novels that succeeded, or by the philosophy that he abjured, than as the man that had Mary Wolstonecraft for his wife, Mrs. Shelley for his daughter, and the immortal Shelley as his son-in-law.

* "Desperation." Yet, as *martyrs* are concerned in the picture, it ought to have been said, 'of desperation and of farewell to earth,' or something equivalent.

JOHN FOSTER.

MR. GILFILLAN* possibly overrates the power of this essayist, and the hold which he has upon the public mind. It is singular, meantime, that whatever might be its degree, much or little, originally his influence was due to an accident of position which in some countries would have tended to destroy it. He was a Dissenter. Now, in England, *that* sometimes operates as an advantage. To dissent from the established form of religion, which could not affect the value of a writer's speculations, may easily become the means of diffusing their reputation, as well as of facilitating their introduction. And in the following way: The great mass of the reading population are absolutely indifferent to such deflexions from the national standard. The man, suppose, is a Baptist: but to be a Baptist is still to be a Protestant, and a Protestant agreeing with his countrymen in everything essential to purity of life and faith. So far there is the most entire neutrality in the public mind, and readiness to receive any impression which the man's powers enable him to make

* "Gallery of Literary Portraits."

There is, indeed, so absolute a carelessness for all inoperative shades of religious difference lurking in the background, that even the ostentatiously liberal hardly feel it a case for parading their liberality. But, on the other hand, his own sectarian party are as energetic to push him forward as all others are passive. They favor him as a brother, and also as one whose credit will react upon their common sect. And this favor, pressing like a wedge upon the unresisting neutrality of the public, soon succeeds in gaining for any able writer among sectarians an exaggerated reputation. Nobody is against him; and a small section acts *for* him in a spirit of resolute partisanship.

To this accident of social position, and to his connection with the *Eclectic Review*, Mr. Foster owed his first advantageous presentation before the public. The misfortune of many an able writer is, not that he is rejected by the world, but that virtually he is never brought conspicuously before them: he is not dismissed unfavorably, but he is never effectually introduced. From this calamity, at the outset, Foster was saved by his party. I happened myself to be in Bristol at the moment when his four essays were first issuing from the press; and everywhere I heard so pointed an account of the expectations connected with Foster by his religious party, that I made it a duty to read his book without delay. It is a distant incident to look back upon — gone by for more than thirty years; but I remember my first impressions, which were these. — first, That the novelty or weight of the thinking was hardly sufficient to account for the sudden popularity without some *extra* influence at work; and,

secondly, That the contrast was remarkable between the uncolored style of his general diction, and the brilliant felicity of occasional images embroidered upon the sober ground of his text. The splendor did not seem spontaneous, or growing up as part of the texture within the loom; it was intermitting, and seemed as extraneous to the substance as the flowers which are chalked for an evening upon the floors of ball-rooms.

Subsequently, I remarked two other features of difference in his manner, neither of which has been overlooked by Mr. Gilfillan, namely, first, The unsocial gloom of his eye, travelling over all things with dissatisfaction; second (which in our days seemed unaccountable), the remarkable limitation of his knowledge. You might suppose the man, equally by his ignorance of passing things and by his ungenial moroseness, to be a specimen newly turned out from the silent cloisters of La Trappe. A monk he seemed by the repulsion of his cloistral feelings, and a monk by the superannuation of his knowledge. Both peculiarities he drew in part from that same sectarian position, operating for evil, to which, in another direction as a conspicuous advantage, he had been indebted for his favorable public introduction. It is not that Foster was generally misanthropic; neither was he, as a sectarian, "a good hater" at any special angle; that is, he was not a zealous hater; but, by temperament, and in some measure by situation, as one pledged to a polemic attitude by his sect, he was a general disliker and a general suspecter. His confidence in human nature was small; for he saw the

clay of the composite statue, but not its gold; and apparently his satisfaction with himself was not much greater. Inexhaustible was his jealousy; and for that reason his philanthropy was everywhere checked by frost and wintry chills. This blight of asceticism in his nature is not of a kind to be briefly illustrated, for it lies diffused through the texture of his writings. But of his other monkish characteristic, his abstraction from the movement and life of his own age, I may give this instance, which I observed by accident about a year since in some *late* edition of his *Essays*. He was speaking of the term *radical* as used to designate a large political party; but so slightly was he acquainted with the history of that party, so little had he watched the growth of this important interest in our political system, that he supposes the term "Radical" to express a mere scoff or movement of irony from the antagonists of that party. It stands, as he fancies, upon the same footing as "Puritan," "Roundhead," &c., amongst our fathers, or "Swaddler," applied to the Evangelicals amongst ourselves. This may seem a trifle; nor do I mention the mistake for any evil which it can lead to, but for the dreamy inattention which it argues to what was most important in the agitations around him. It may cause nothing; but how much does it presume? Could a man, interested in the motion of human principles, or the revolutions of his own country, have failed to notice the rise of a new party which loudly proclaimed its own mission and purposes in the very name which it assumed? The term "Radical" was used elliptically: Mr. Hunt, and all about him, constantly gave out that they were

reformers who went to the *root* — *radical* reformers ; whilst all previous political parties they held to be merely masquerading as reformers, or, at least, wanting in the determination to go deep enough. The party name “Radical” was no insult of enemies ; it was a cognizance self-adopted by the party which it designates, and worn with pride ; and whatever might be the degree of *personal* weight belonging to Mr. Hunt, no man, who saw into the composition of society amongst ourselves, could doubt that his principles were destined to a most extensive diffusion — were sure of a permanent settlement amongst the great party interests — and, therefore, sure of disturbing thenceforwards forever the previous equilibrium of forces in our English social system. To mistake the origin or history of a word is nothing ; but to mistake it, when that history of a word ran along with the history of a *thing* destined to change all the aspects of our English present and future, implies a sleep of Epimenides amongst the shocks which are unsettling the realities of earth.

The four original essays, by which Foster was first known to the public, are those by which he is still best known. It cannot be said of them that they have any *practical* character calculated to serve the uses of life. They terminate in speculations that apply themselves little enough to any business of the world. Whether a man should write memoirs of himself cannot have any personal interest for one reader in a myriad. And two of the essays have even a misleading tendency. That upon “Decision of Character” places a very exaggerated valuation upon one quality of human

temperament, which is neither rare, nor at all necessarily allied with the most elevated features of moral grandeur. Coleridge, because he had no business talents himself, admired them preposterously in others; or fancied them vast when they existed only in a slight degree. And, upon the same principle, I suspect that Mr. Foster rated so highly the quality of decision in matters of action, chiefly because he wanted it himself. Obstinacy is a gift more extensively sown than Foster was willing to admit. And *his* scale of appreciation, if it were practically applied to the men of history, would lead to judgments immoderately perverse. Milton would rank far below Luther. In reality, as Mr. Gilfillan justly remarks, "Decision of character is not, strictly, a moral power; and it is extremely dangerous to pay that homage to any intellectual quality, which is sacred to virtue alone." But even this estimate must often tend to exaggeration; for the most inexorable decision is much more closely connected with bodily differences of temperament than with any superiority of mind. It rests too much upon a physical basis; and, of all qualities whatever, it is the most liable to vicious varieties of degeneration. The worst result from this essay is not merely speculative; it trains the feelings to false admirations; and upon a path which is the more dangerous, as the besetting temptation of our English life lies already towards an estimate much too high of all qualities bearing upon the active and the practical. We need no spur in that direction.

The essay upon the use of technically religious language seems even worse by its tendency, although the necessities of the subject will forever neutralize

Foster's advice. Mr. Gilfillan is, in this instance disposed to defend him: "Foster does not ridicule the use, but the abuse, of technical language, as applied to divine things; and proposes, merely as an experiment, to translate it in accommodation to fastidious tastes." Safely, however, it may be assumed, that, in all such cases, the fastidious taste is but another aspect of hatred to religious themes,—a hatred which there is neither justice nor use in attempting to propitiate. Cant words ought certainly to be proscribed, as degrading to the majesty of religion: the word "prayerful," for instance, so commonly used of late years, seems objectionable; and such words as "savory," which is one of those cited by Foster himself, are absolutely abominable, when applied to spiritual or intellectual objects. It is not fastidiousness, but manliness and good feeling, which are outraged by such vulgarities. On the other hand, the word "grace" expresses an idea so exclusively belonging to Christianity, and so indispensable to the wholeness of its philosophy, that any attempt to seek for equivalent terms of mere human growth, or amongst the vocabularies of mere worldly usage, must terminate in conscious failure, or else in utter self-delusion. Christianity, having introduced many ideas that are absolutely new, such as *faith*, *charity*, *holiness*, the nature of *God*, of human *frailty*, &c., is as much entitled (nay as much obliged and pledged) to a peculiar language and terminology as chemistry. Let a man try if he can find a word in the market-place fitted to be the substitute for the word *gas* or *alkali*. The danger in fact, lies exactly in the opposite direction to that

ndicated by Foster. No fear that men of elegant taste should be revolted by the use of what, after all, is scriptural language ; for it is plain that he who *could* be so revolted, wants nothing seriously with religion. But there is great fear that any general disposition to angle for readers of *extra* refinement, or to court the effeminately fastidious, by sacrificing the majestic simplicities of scriptural diction, would and must end in a ruinous dilution of religious truths ; along with the characteristic language of Christian philosophy, would exhale its characteristic doctrines.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.*

THIS man, who would have drawn in the scales against a select vestry of Fosters, is for the present deeper in the world's oblivion than the man with whom I here connect his name. *That* seems puzzling. For, if Hazlitt were misanthropic, so was Foster: both as writers were splenetic and more than peevish; but Hazlitt requited his reader for the pain of travelling through so gloomy an atmosphere, by the rich vegetation which his teeming intellect threw up as it moved along. The soil in *his* brain was of a volcanic fertility; whereas, in Foster, as in some tenacious clay, if the life were deep, it was slow and sullen in its throes. The reason for at all speaking of them in connection is, that both were essayists; neither in fact writing anything of note *except* essays, moral or critical; and both were bred at the feet of Dissenters. But how different were the results from that connection! Foster turned it to a blessing, winning the jewel that is most of all to be coveted, peace and the *fallentis semita vitæ*. Hazlitt, on the other hand, sailed wilfully away

* "Gallery of Literary Portraits." By George Gilfillan.

from this sheltering harbor of his father's profession, — for sheltering it might have proved to *him*, and *did* prove to his youth; — only to toss ever afterwards as a drifting wreck at the mercy of storms. Hazlitt was not one of those who *could* have illustrated the benefits of a connection with a sect, that is, with a small confederation hostile by position to a larger; for the hostility from without, in order to react, presumes a concord from within. Nor does *his* case impeach the correctness of what I have said on that subject in speaking of Foster. He owed no introduction to the Dissenters; but it was because he *would* owe none. The Ishmaelite, whose hand is against every man, yet smiles at the approach of a brother, and gives the salutation of "Peace be with you!" to the tribe of his father. But Hazlitt smiled upon no man, nor exchanged tokens of peace with the nearest of fraternities. Wieland, in his "Oberon," says of a benign patriarch —

"His eye a smile on all creation beamed."

Travestied as to one word, the line would have described Hazlitt —

"His eye a scowl on all creation beamed."

This inveterate misanthropy was constitutional; exasperated it certainly had been by accidents of life, by disappointments, by mortifications, by insults, and still more by having wilfully placed himself in collision from the first with all the interests that were in the sunshine of this world, and with all the persons that were then powerful in England. But my impression was, if I had a right to *have* any impression with regard to one whom I knew so slightly, that no change of

position or of fortunes could have brought Hazlitt into reconciliation with the fashion of this world, or of this England, or "this now." It seemed to me that he hated those whom hollow custom obliged him to call his "friends," considerably more than those whom notorious differences of opinion entitled him to rank as his enemies. At least within the ring of politics this was so. Between those particular Whigs whom literature had corrected him with, and the whole gang of *us* Conservatives, he showed the same difference in his mode of fencing and parrying, and even in his style of civilities, as between the domestic traitor hiding a stiletto among his robes of peace, and the bold enemy who sends a trumpet before him, and rides up sword-in-hand against your gates. *Whatever is* — so much I conceive to have been a fundamental lemma for Hazlitt — *is wrong*. So much he thought it safe to postulate. *How* it was wrong, might require an impracticable investigation; you might fail for a century to discover: but *that* it was wrong, he nailed down as a point of faith, that could stand out against all counter-presumptions from argument, or counter-evidences from experience. A friend of his it was, a friend wishing to love him, and admiring him almost to extravagance, who told me, in illustration of the dark, sinister gloom which sat forever upon Hazlitt's countenance and gestures, that involuntarily when Hazlitt put his hand within his waistcoat (as a mere unconscious trick of habit), he himself felt a sudden recoil of fear, as from one who was searching for a hidden dagger. Like "a Moore of Malabar," as described in the Faery Queen, at intervals Hazlitt threw up his angry eyes, and dark

locks, as if wishing to affront the sun, or to search the air for hostility. And the same friend, on another occasion, described the sort of feudal fidelity to his belligerent duties, which in company seemed to animate Hazlitt, as though he were mounting guard on all the citadels of malignity, under some *sacramentum militare*, by the following trait, — that, if it had happened to Hazlitt to be called out of the room, or to be withdrawn for a moment from the current of the general conversation, by a fit of abstraction, or by a private whisper to himself from some person sitting at his elbow, always, on resuming his place as a party to what might be called the public business of the company, he looked round him with a mixed air of suspicion and defiance, such as seemed to challenge everybody by some stern adjuration into revealing whether, during his own absence or inattention, anything had been said demanding condign punishment at his hands. “Has any man uttered or presumed to insinuate,” he seemed to insist upon knowing, “during this *interregnum*, things that I ought to proceed against as treasonable to the interests which I defend?” He had the unresting irritability of Rousseau, but in a nobler shape; for Rousseau transfigured every possible act or design of his acquaintances into some personal relation to himself. The vile act was obviously meant, as a child could understand, to injure the person of Rousseau, or his interests, or his reputation. It was meant to wound his feelings, or to misrepresent his acts calumniously, or secretly to supplant his footing. But, on the contrary, Hazlitt viewed all personal affronts or casual slights towards himself, as tending to something more

general, and masking under a pretended horror of Hazlitt, the author, a real hatred, deeper than it was always safe to avow, for those social interests which he was reputed to defend. "It was not Hazlitt whom the wretches struck at; no, no—it was democracy, or it was freedom, or it was Napoleon, whose shadow they saw in the rear of Hazlitt; and Napoleon, not for anything in him that might be really bad, but in revenge of that consuming wrath against the thrones of Christendom, for which (said Hazlitt) let us glorify his name eternally."

Yet Hazlitt, like other men, and perhaps with more bitterness than other men, sought for love and for intervals of rest, in which all anger might sleep, and enmity might be laid aside like a travelling-dress, after tumultuous journeys :

“ Though the sea-horse on the ocean
Own no dear domestic cave,
Yet he slumbers without motion
On the still and halcyon wave.

If, on windy days, the raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less he loves his haven
On the bosom of a cliff.

If almost with eagle pinion
O'er the Alps the chamois roam,
Yet he has some small dominion,
Which, no doubt, he calls his home.”

But Hazlitt, restless as the sea-horse, as the raven, as the chamois, found not their respites from storm; he sought, but sought in vain. And for *him* the

closing stanza of that little poem remained true to his dying hour. In the person of the "Wandering Jew," *he* might complain, —

" Day and night my toils redouble :
 Never nearer to the goal,
 Night and day I feel the trouble
 Of the wanderer in my soul."

Domicile he had not, round whose hearth his affections might gather; rest he had not for the sole of his burning foot. One chance of regaining some peace, or a chance as he trusted for a time, was torn from him at the moment of gathering its blossoms. He had been divorced from his wife, not by the law of England, which would have argued criminality in *her*, but by Scottish law, satisfied with some proof of frailty in himself. Subsequently he became deeply fascinated by a young woman, in no very elevated rank, — for she held some domestic office of superintendence in a boarding-house kept by her father, — but of interesting person, and endowed with strong intellectual sensibilities. She had encouraged Hazlitt; had gratified him by reading his works with intelligent sympathy; and, under what form of duplicity it is hard to say, had partly engaged her faith to Hazlitt as his future wife, whilst secretly she was holding a correspondence, too tender to be misinterpreted, with a gentleman resident in the same establishment. Suspicions were put aside for a time; but they returned, and gathered too thickly for Hazlitt's penetration to cheat itself any longer. Once and forever he resolved to satisfy himself. On a Sunday, fatal to him

and his farewell hopes of domestic happiness, he had reason to believe that she, whom he now loved to excess, had made some appointment out-of-doors with his rival. It was in London; and through the crowds of London, Hazlitt followed her steps to the rendezvous. Fancying herself lost in the multitude that streamed through Lincoln's-inn-fields, the treacherous young woman met her more favored lover without alarm, and betrayed, too clearly for any further deception, the state of her affections by the tenderness of her manner. *There* went out the last light that threw a guiding ray over the storm-vexed course of Hazlitt. He was too much in earnest, and he had witnessed too much, to be deceived or appeased. "I whistled her down the wind," was his own account of the catastrophe; but, in doing so, he had torn his own heart-strings, entangled with her "jesses." Neither did he, as others would have done, seek to disguise his misfortune. On the contrary, he cared not for the ridicule attached to such a situation amongst the unfeeling: the wrench within had been too profound to leave room for sensibility to the sneers outside. A fast friend of his at that time, and one who never ceased to be his apologist, described him to me as having become absolutely maniacal during the first pressure of this affliction. He went about proclaiming the case, and insisting on its details, to every stranger that would listen. He even published the whole story to the world, in his "Modern Pygmalion." And people generally, who could not be aware of his feelings, or the way in which this treachery acted upon his mind as a ratification of all other treacheries and

wrongs that he had suffered through life, laughed at him, or expressed disgust for him as too coarsely indelicate in making such disclosures. But there was no indelicacy in such an act of confidence, growing, as it did, out of his lacerated heart. It was an explosion of frenzy. He threw out his clamorous anguish to the clouds, and to the winds, and to the air; caring not *who* might listen, *who* might sympathize, or *who* might sneer. Pity was no demand of his; laughter was no wrong: the sole necessity for *him* was — to empty his overburdened spirit.

After this desolating experience, the exasperation of Hazlitt's political temper grew fiercer, darker, steadier. His "Life of Napoleon" was prosecuted subsequently to this, and perhaps under this remembrance, as a reservoir that might receive all the vast overflows of his wrath, much of which was not merely political, or in a spirit of bacchanalian partisanship, but was even morbidly anti-social. He hated, with all his heart, every institution of man, and all his pretensions. He loathed his own relation to the human race.

It was but on a few occasions that I ever met Mr. Hazlitt myself; and those occasions, or all but one, were some time subsequent to the case of female treachery which I have here described. Twice, I think, or it might be three times, we walked for a few miles together: it was in London, late at night, and after leaving a party. Though depressed by the spectacle of a mind always in agitation from the gloomier passions, I was yet amused by the pertinacity with which he clung, through bad reasons or

no reasons, to any public slander floating against men in power, or in the highest rank. No feather, or dowl of a feather, but was heavy enough for *him*. Amongst other instances of this willingness to be deluded by rumors, if they took a direction favorable to his own bias, Hazlitt had adopted the whole strength of popular hatred which for many years ran violently against the King of Hanover, at that time Duke of Cumberland. A dark calumny had arisen against this prince, amongst the populace of London, as though he had been accessory to the death of his valet. This valet [Sellis] had, in fact, attempted to murder the prince; and all that can be said in palliation of his act, is, that he *believed* himself to have sustained, in the person of his beautiful wife, the heaviest dishonor incident to man. How that matter stood, I pretend not to know: the attempt at murder was baffled; and the valet then destroyed himself with a razor. All this had been regularly sifted by a coroner's inquest; and I remarked to Hazlitt, that the witnesses seemed to have been called, indifferently, from all quarters likely to have known the facts; so that, if this inquest had failed to elicit the truth, we might, with equal reason, presume as much of all other inquests. From the verdict of a jury, except in very peculiar cases, no candid and temperate man will allow himself to believe any appeal sustainable; for, having the witnesses before them face to face, and hearing the *whole* of the evidence, a jury have always some means of forming a judgment which cannot be open to him who depends upon an abridged report. But, on this subject, Hazlitt would hear no reason. He said — "No

all the princely houses of Europe have the instinct of murder running in their blood;—they cherish it through their privilege of making war, which being wholesale murder, once having reconciled themselves to *that*, they think of retail murder, committed on you or me, as of no crime at all.” Under this obstinate prejudice against the duke, Hazlitt read everything that he did, or did *not* do, in a perverse spirit. And, in one of these nightly walks, he mentioned to me, as something quite worthy of a murderer, the following little trait of casuistry in the royal duke’s distribution of courtesies. “I saw it myself,” said Hazlitt, “so no coroner’s jury can put me down.” His royal highness had rooms in St. James’; and, one day, as he was issuing from the palace into Pall-Mall, Hazlitt happened to be immediately behind him; he could therefore watch his motions along the whole line of his progress. It is the custom in England, wheresoever the persons of the royal family are familiar to the public eye, as at Windsor, &c., that all passengers in the streets, on seeing them, walk bare-headed, or make some signal of dutiful respect. On this occasion, all the men, who met the prince, took off their hats; the prince acknowledging every such obeisance by a separate bow. Pall-Mall being finished, and its whole harvest of royal salutations gathered in, next the duke came to Cockspur street. But here, and taking a station close to the crossing, which daily he beautified and polished with his broom, stood a Negro sweep. If human at all, which some people doubted, he was pretty nearly as abject a representative of our human family divine as can ever have

existed. Still he was held to be a man by the law of the land, which would have hanged any person, gentle or simple, for cutting his throat. Law (it is certain), conceived him to be a man, however poor a one; though Medicine, in an under-tone, muttered, sometimes, a demur to that opinion. But here the sweep *was*, whether man or beast, standing humbly in the path of royalty; vanish he would not; he was (as *The Times* says of the Corn-League) "a great fact," if rather a muddy one; and though, by his own confession (repeated one thousand times a day), both "a nigger" and a sweep ["Remember poor nigger, your honor!" "remember poor sweep!"], yet the creature could take off his rag of a hat, and earn the bow of a prince, as well as any white native of St. James'. What was to be done? A great case of conscience was on the point of being raised in the person of a paralytic nigger; nay, possibly a state question—Ought a son of England,* could a son of England

* "Son of England;" that is, prince of the blood in the *direct*, and not in the collateral, line. I mention this for the sake of some readers, who may not be aware that this beautiful formula, so well known in France, is often transferred by the French writers of memoirs to our English princes, though little used amongst ourselves. Gaston, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV., was "a son of France," as being a child of Louis XIII. But the son of Gaston, namely, the Regent Duke of Orleans, was a *grandson* of France. The first wife of Gaston, our Princess Henrietta, was called "*Fille d'Angleterre*," as being a daughter of Charles I. The Princess Charlotte, again, was a *daughter* of England; her present majesty, a *granddaughter* of England. But all these ladies collectively would be called, on the French principle, the children of England.

descend from his majestic pedestal to gild with the rays of his condescension such a grub, such a very doubtful grub, as this? Total Pall-Mall was sagacious of the coming crisis; judgment was going to be delivered; a precedent to be raised; and Pall-Mall stood still, with Hazlitt at its head, to learn the issue. How if the black should be a Jacobin, and (in the event of the duke's bowing) should have a bas-relief sculptured on his tomb, exhibiting an English prince, and a German king, as two separate personages, in the act of worshipping his broom? Luckily, it was not the black's province to settle the case. The Duke of Cumberland, seeing no counsel at hand to argue either the *pro* or the *contra*, found himself obliged to settle the question *de plano*; so, drawing out his purse, he kept his hat as rigidly settled on his head as William Penn and Mead did before the Recorder of London. All Pall-Mall applauded: *contradicente* Gulielmo Hazlitt, and Hazlitt only. The black swore that the prince gave him half-a-crown; but whether he regarded this in the light of a god-send to his avarice or a shipwreck to his ambition—whether he was more thankful for the money gained, or angry for the honor lost—did not transpire. “No matter,” said Hazlitt, “the black might be a fool; but I insist upon it, that he was entitled to the bow, since all Pall-Mall had it before him; and that it was unprincely to refuse it.” Either as a black or as a scavenger, Hazlitt held him “qualified” for sustaining a royal bow: as a black, was he not a specimen (if rather a damaged one) of the *homo sapiens* described by Linnæus? As a sweep, in possession (by whatever title) of a lucrative cross-

ing, had he not a kind of estate in London? Was he not, said Hazlitt, a fellow-subject, capable of committing treason, and paying taxes into the treasury? Not perhaps in any direct shape, but indirect taxes most certainly on his tobacco—and even on his broom.

These things could not be denied. But still, when my turn came for speaking, I confessed frankly that (politics apart) my feeling in the case went along with the duke's. The bow would not be so useful to the black as the half-crown: he could not possibly have both; for how could any man make a bow to a beggar when in the act of giving him half-a-crown? Then, on the other hand, this bow, so useless to the sweep, and (to speak by a vulgar adage) as superfluous as a side-pocket to a cow, would react upon the other bows distributed along the line of Pall-Mall, so as to neutralize them one and all. No honor could continue such in which a paralytic negro sweep was associated. This distinction, however, occurred to me; that if, instead of a prince and a subject, the royal dispenser of bows had been a king, he ought *not* to have excluded the black from participation; because, as the common father of his people, he ought not to know of any difference amongst those who are equally his children. And in illustration of that opinion, I sketched a little scene which I had myself witnessed, and with great pleasure, upon occasion of a visit made to Drury Lane by George IV. when regent. At another time I may tell it to the reader. Hazlitt, however, listened fretfully to me when praising the deportment and beautiful gestures of one conservative leader; though he had

compelled *me* to hear the most disadvantageous comments on another.

As a lecturer, I do not know what Hazlitt was, having never had an opportunity of hearing him. Some qualities in his style of composition were calculated to assist the purposes of a lecturer, who must produce an effect oftentimes by independent sentences and paragraphs, who must glitter and surprise, who must turn round within the narrowest compass, and cannot rely upon any sort of attention that would cost an effort. Mr. Gilfillan says, that "He proved more popular than was expected by those who knew his uncompromising scorn of all those tricks and petty artifices which are frequently employed to pump up applause. His manner was somewhat abrupt and monotonous, but earnest and energetic." At the same time, Mr. Gilfillan takes an occasion to express some opinions, which appear very just, upon the unfitness (generally speaking) of men whom he describes as "fiercely inspired," for this mode of display. The truth is, that all genius implies originality, and sometimes uncontrollable singularity, in the habits of thinking, and in the modes of viewing as well as of estimating objects. Whereas a miscellaneous audience is best conciliated by that sort of talent which reflects the average mind, which is not over-weighted in any one direction, is not tempted into any extreme, and is able to preserve a steady, rope-dancer's equilibrium of posture upon themes where a man of genius is most apt to lose it.

It would be interesting to have a full and accurate list of Hazlitt's works, including, of course, his contributions to journals and encyclopædias. These last,

as shorter, and oftener springing from an *impromptu* effort, are more likely, than his regular books, to have been written with a pleasurable enthusiasm; and the writer's proportion of pleasure, in such cases, very often becomes the regulating law for his reader's. Amongst the philosophical works of Hazlitt, I do not observe that Mr. Gilfillan is aware of two that are likely to be specially interesting. One is an examination of David Hartley, at least as to his law of association. Thirty years ago, I looked into it slightly; but my reverence for Hartley offended me with its tone; and afterwards, hearing that Coleridge challenged for his own most of what was important in the thoughts, I lost all interest in the essay. Hazlitt, having heard Coleridge talk on this theme, must have approached it with a mind largely preoccupied as regarded the weak points in Hartley, and the particular tactics for assailing them. But still the great talents for speculative research which Hazlitt had from nature, without having given to them the benefit of much culture or much exercise, would justify our attentive examination of the work. It forms part of the volume which contains the "Essay on Human Action;" which volume, by the way, Mr. Gilfillan supposes to have won the special applause of Sir James Mackintosh, then in Bengal. This, if accurately stated, is creditable to Sir James' generosity; for in this particular volume it is that Hazlitt makes a pointed assault, in sneering terms, and very unnecessarily, upon Sir James.

The other little work unnoticed by Mr. Gilfillan, is an examination (but under what title I cannot say) of Lindley Murray's English Grammar. This may seem

by its subject, a trifle ; yet Hazlitt could hardly have had a motive for such an effort but in some philosophic perception of the ignorance betrayed by many grammars of our language, and sometimes by that of Lindley Murray ; which Lindley, by the way, though resident in England, was an American. There is great room for a useful display of philosophic subtlety in an English grammar, even though meant for schools. Hazlitt could not *but* have furnished something of value towards such a display. And if (as I was once told) his book was suppressed, I imagine that this suppression must have been purchased by some powerful publisher interested in keeping up the current reputation of Murray.

“Strange stories,” says Mr. Gilfillan, “are told about his [Hazlitt’s] latter days, and his death-bed.” I know not whether I properly understand Mr. Gilfillan. The stories which I myself have happened to hear, were not so much “strange,” since they arose, naturally enough, out of pecuniary embarrassments, as they were afflicting in the turn they took. Dramatically viewed, if a man were speaking of things so far removed from our own times and interests as to excuse that sort of language, the circumstances of Hazlitt’s last hours might rivet the gaze of a critic as fitted, harmoniously, with almost scenic art, to the whole tenor of his life ; fitted equally to rouse his wrath, to deepen his dejection, and in the hour of death to justify his misanthropy. But I have no wish to utter a word in things which I know only at second-hand, and cannot speak upon without risk of misstating facts or

doing injustice to persons. I prefer closing this section with the words of Mr. Gilfillan :

“Well says Bulwer, that of all the mental wrecks which have occurred in our era, this was the most melancholy. Others may have been as unhappy in their domestic circumstances, and gone down steeper places of dissipation than he ; but they had meanwhile the breath of popularity, if not of wealth and station, to give them a certain solace.’ What had Hazlitt of this nature ? Mr. Gilfillan answers, — “ Absolutely nothing to support and cheer him. With no hope, no fortune, no *status* in society ; no certain popularity as a writer, no domestic peace, little sympathy from kindred spirits, little support from his political party, no moral management, no definite belief ; with great powers, and great passions within, and with a host of powerful enemies without, it was his to enact one of the saddest tragedies on which the sun ever shone. Such is a faithful portraiture of an extraordinary man, whose restless intellect and stormy passions have now, for fifteen years, found that repose in the grave which was denied them above it.” Mr. Gilfillan concludes with expressing his conviction, in which I desire to concur that both enemies and friends will *now* join in admiration for the man ; “ both will readily concede *now*, that a subtle thinker, an eloquent writer, a lover of beauty and poetry, and man and truth, one of the best of critics, and not the worst of men, expired in William Hazlitt.” *Requiescat in pace!*

A PERIPATETIC PHILOSOPHER.

HE was a man of very extraordinary genius. He has generally been treated by those who have spoken of him in print as a madman. But this is a mistake; and must have been founded chiefly on the titles of his books. He was a man of fervid mind and of sublime aspirations: but he was no madman; or, if he was, then I say that it is so far desirable to be a madman. In 1798 or 1799, when I must have been about thirteen years old, Walking Stewart was in Bath—where my family at that time resided. He frequented the pump-room, and I believe all public places—walking up and down, and dispersing his philosophic opinions to the right and the left, like a Grecian philosopher. The first time I saw him was at a concert in the Upper Rooms; he was pointed out to me by one of my party as a very eccentric man who had walked over the habitable globe. I remember that Madame Mara was at that moment singing: and Walking Stewart, who was a true lover of music (as I afterwards came to know), was hanging upon her notes like a bee upon a jessamine flower. His countenance was striking, and expressed the union of benignity with philosophic habits of thought. In such health had his pedestrian exercises preserved him, connected

with his abstemious mode of living, that though he must at that time have been considerably above forty, he did not look older than twenty-eight; at least the face which remained upon my recollection for some years was that of a young man. Nearly ten years afterwards I became acquainted with him. During the interval I had picked up one of his works in Bristol, — viz. his *Travels to discover the Source of Moral Motion*, the second volume of which is entitled *The Apocalypse of Nature*. I had been greatly impressed by the sound and original views which in the first volume he had taken of the national characters throughout Europe. In particular he was the first, and so far as I know the only writer who had noticed the profound error of ascribing a phlegmatic character to the English nation. ‘English phlegm’ is the constant expression of authors when contrasting the English with the French. Now the truth is, that, beyond that of all other nations, it has a substratum of profound passion: and, if we are to recur to the old doctrine of temperaments, the English character must be classed not under the *phlegmatic* but under the *melancholic* temperament; and the French under the *sanguine*. The character of a nation may be judged of in this particular by examining its idiomatic language. The French, in whom the lower forms of passion are constantly bubbling up from the shallow and superficial character of their feelings, have appropriated all the phrases of passion to the service of trivial and ordinary life: and hence they have no language of passion for the service of poetry or of occasions really demanding it: for it has been already enfeebled by continual association with cases of an unimpassioned

order. But a character of deeper passion has a perpetual standard in itself, by which as by an instinct it tries all cases, and rejects the language of passion as disproportionate and ludicrous where it is not fully justified. 'Ah Heavens!' or 'Oh my God!' are exclamations with us so exclusively reserved for cases of profound interest,—that on hearing a woman even (*i. e.* a person of the sex most easily excited) utter such words, we look round expecting to see her child in some situation of danger. But, in France, 'Ciel!' and 'Oh mon Dieu!' are uttered by every woman if a mouse does but run across the floor. The ignorant and the thoughtless, however, will continue to class the English character under the phlegmatic temperament, whilst the philosopher will perceive that it is the exact polar antithesis to a phlegmatic character. In this conclusion, though otherwise expressed and illustrated, Walking Stewart's view of the English character will be found to terminate: and his opinion is especially valuable—first and chiefly, because he was a philosopher; secondly, because his acquaintance with man civilized and uncivilized, under all national distinctions, was absolutely unrivalled. Meantime, this and others of his opinions were expressed in language that if literally construed would often appear insane or absurd. The truth is, his long intercourse with foreign nations had given something of a hybrid tincture to his diction; in some of his works, for instance, he uses the French word *hélas!* uniformly for the English *alas!* and apparently with no consciousness of his mistake. He had also this singularity about him—that he was everlastingly metaphysicizing against metaphysics. To me, who was buried in metaphysical reveries from my

earliest days, this was not likely to be an attraction ; any more than the vicious structure of his diction was likely to please my scholarlike taste. All grounds of disgust, however, gave way before my sense of his powerful merits ; and, as I have said, I sought his acquaintance. Coming up to London from Oxford about 1807 or 1808 I made inquiries about him ; and found that he usually read the papers at a coffee-room in Piccadilly : understanding that he was poor, it struck me that he might not wish to receive visits at his lodgings, and therefore I sought him at the coffee-room. Here I took the liberty of introducing myself to him. He received me courteously, and invited me to his rooms — which at that time were in Sherrard-street, Golden-square — a street already memorable to me. I was much struck with the eloquence of his conversation ; and afterwards I found that Mr. Wordsworth, himself the most eloquent of men in conversation, had been equally struck when he had met him at Paris between the years 1790 and 1792, during the early storms of the French revolution. In Sherrard-street I visited him repeatedly, and took notes of the conversations I had with him on various subjects. These I must have somewhere or other ; and I wish I could introduce them here, as they would interest the reader. Occasionally in these conversations, as in his books, he introduced a few notices of his private history : in particular I remember his telling me that in the East Indies he had been a prisoner of Hyder's : that he had escaped with some difficulty ; and that, in the service of one of the native princes as secretary or interpreter, he had accumulated a small fortune. This must have been too small, I fear, at that time to allow

him even a philosopher's comforts: for some part of it, invested in the French funds, had been confiscated. I was grieved to see a man of so much ability, of gentlemanly manners, and refined habits, and with the infirmity of deafness, suffering under such obvious privations; and I once took the liberty, on a fit occasion presenting itself, of requesting that he would allow me to send him some books which he had been casually regretting that he did not possess; for I was at that time in the hey-day of my worldly prosperity. This offer, however, he declined with firmness and dignity, though not unkindly. And I now mention it, because I have seen him charged in print with a selfish regard to his own pecuniary interest. On the contrary, he appeared to me a very liberal and generous man: and I well remember that, whilst he refused to accept of any thing from me, he compelled me to receive as presents all the books which he published during my acquaintance with him: two of these, corrected with his own hand, viz. the *Lyre of Apollo* and the *Sophiometer*, I have lately found amongst other books left in London; and others he forwarded to me in Westmoreland. In 1809 I saw him often: in the spring of that year, I happened to be in London; and Mr. Wordsworth's tract on the Convention of Cintra being at that time in the printer's hands, I superintended the publication of it; and, at Mr. Wordsworth's request, I added a long note on Spanish affairs which is printed in the Appendix. The opinions I expressed in this note on the Spanish character at that time much calumniated, on the retreat to Corunna then fresh in the public mind, above all, the contempt I expressed for the superstition in respect to the French military

prowess which was then universal and at its height, and which gave way in fact only to the campaigns of 1814 and 1815, fell in, as it happened, with Mr. Stewart's political creed in those points where at that time it met with most opposition. In 1812 it was, I think, that I saw him for the last time: and by the way, on the day of my parting with him, I had an amusing proof in my own experience of that sort of ubiquity ascribed to him by a witty writer in the London Magazine: I met him and shook hands with him under Somerset-house, telling him that I should leave town that evening for Westmoreland. Thence I went by the very shortest road (*i. e.* through Moor-street, Soho — for I am learned in many quarters of London) towards a point which necessarily led me through Tottenham-court-road: I stopped nowhere and walked fast: yet so it was that in Tottenham-court-road I was not overtaken by (*that* was comprehensible), but overtook, Walking Stewart. Certainly, as the above writer alleges, there must have been three Walking Stewarts in London. He seemed no ways surprised at this himself, but explained to me that somewhere or other in the neighborhood of Tottenham-court-road there was a little theatre, at which there was dancing and occasionally good singing, between which and a neighboring coffee-house he sometimes divided his evenings. Singing, it seems, he could hear in spite of his deafness. In this street I took my final leave of him; it turned out such; and, anticipating at the time that it would be so, I looked after his white hat at the moment it was disappearing and exclaimed — 'Farewell, thou half-crazy and most eloquent man! I shall never see thy face again.' I

did not intend, at that moment, to visit London again for some years: as it happened, I was there for a short time in 1814: and then I heard, to my great satisfaction, that Walking Stewart had recovered a considerable sum (about £14,000 I believe) from the East India Company; and from the abstract given in the London Magazine of the Memoir by his relation, I have since learned that he applied this money most wisely to the purchase of an annuity, and that he 'persisted in living' too long for the peace of an annuity office. So fare all companies East and West, and all annuity offices, that stand opposed in interest to philosophers! In 1814, however, to my great regret, I did not see him; for I was then taking a great deal of opium, and never could contrive to issue to the light of day soon enough for a morning call upon a philosopher of such early hours; and in the evening I concluded that he would be generally abroad, from what he had formerly communicated to me of his own habits. It seems, however, that he afterwards held *conversaziones* at his own rooms; and did not stir out to theatres quite so much. From a brother of mine, who at one time occupied rooms in the same house with him, I learned that in other respects he did not deviate in his prosperity from the philosophic tenor of his former life. He abated nothing of his peripatetic exercises; and repaired duly in the morning, as he had done in former years, to St. James's Park, — where he sate in contemplative ease amongst the zows, inhaling their balmy breath and pursuing his philosophic reveries. He had also purchased an organ, or more than one, with which he solaced his solitude and beguiled himself of uneasy thoughts if he ever had any.

The works of Walking Stewart must be read with some indulgence; the titles are generally too lofty and pretending and somewhat extravagant; the composition is lax and unprecise, as I have before said; and the doctrines are occasionally very bold, incautiously stated, and too hardy and high-toned for the nervous effeminacy of many modern moralists. But Walking Stewart was a man who thought nobly of human nature: he wrote therefore at times in the spirit and with the indignation of an ancient prophet against the oppressors and destroyers of the time. In particular I remember that in one or more of the pamphlets which I received from him at Grasmere he expressed himself in such terms on the subject of Tyrannicide (distinguishing the cases in which it was and was not lawful) as seemed to Mr. Wordsworth and myself every way worthy of a philosopher; but, from the way in which that subject was treated in the House of Commons, where it was at that time occasionally introduced, it was plain that his doctrine was not fitted for the luxurious and relaxed morals of the age. Like all men who think nobly of human nature, Walking Stewart thought of it hopefully. In some respects his hopes were wisely grounded; in others they rested too much upon certain metaphysical speculations which are untenable, and which satisfied himself only because his researches in that track had been purely self-originated and self-disciplined. He relied upon his own native strength of mind; but in questions, which the wisdom and philosophy of every age building successively upon each other have not been able to settle, no mind, however strong, is entitled to build wholly upon itself. In many things he shocked the

religious sense — especially as it exists in unphilosophic minds ; he held a sort of rude and unscientific Spinosism ; and he expressed it coarsely and in the way most likely to give offence. And indeed there can be no stronger proof of the utter obscurity in which his works have slumbered than that they should all have escaped prosecution. He also allowed himself to look too lightly and indulgently on the afflicting spectacle of female prostitution as it exists in London and in all great cities. This was the only point on which I was disposed to quarrel with him ; for I could not but view it as a greater reproach to human nature than the slave-trade or any sight of wretchedness that the sun looks down upon. I often told him so ; and that I was at a loss to guess how a philosopher could allow himself to view it simply as part of the equipage of civil life, and as reasonably making part of the establishment and furniture of a great city as police-offices, lamp-lighting, or newspapers. Waiving however this one instance of something like compliance with the brutal spirit of the world, on all other subjects he was eminently unworldly, child-like, simple-minded, and upright. He would flatter no man : even when addressing nations, it is almost laughable to see how invariably he prefaces his counsels with such plain truths uttered in a manner so offensive as must have defeated his purpose if it had otherwise any chance of being accomplished. For instance, in addressing America, he begins thus : — ‘ People of America ! since your separation from the mother-country your moral character has degenerated in the energy of thought and sense ; produced by the absence of your association and intercourse with British officers and

merchants: you have no moral discernment to distinguish between the protective power of England and the destructive power of France.' And his letter to the Irish nation opens in this agreeable and conciliatory manner:—'People of Ireland! I address you as a true philosopher of nature, foreseeing the perpetual misery your irreflective character and total absence of moral discernment are preparing for' &c. The second sentence begins thus—'You are sacrilegiously arresting the arm of your parent kingdom fighting the cause of man and nature, when the triumph of the fiend of French police-terror would be your own instant extirpation—.' And the letter closes thus:—'I see but one awful alternative—that Ireland will be a perpetual moral volcano, threatening the destruction of the world, if the education and instruction of thought and sense shall not be able to generate the faculty of moral discernment among a very numerous class of the population, who detest the civic calm as sailors the natural calm—and make civic rights on which they cannot reason a pretext for feuds which they delight in.' As he spoke freely and boldly to others, so he spoke loftily of himself: at p. 313, of 'The Harp of Apollo,' on making a comparison of himself with Socrates (in which he naturally gives the preference to himself) he styles 'The Harp,' &c. 'this unparalleled work of human energy.' At p. 315, he calls it 'this stupendous work;' and lower down on the same page he says—'I was turned out of school at the age of fifteen for a dunce or blockhead, because I would not stuff into my memory all the nonsense of erudition and learning; and if future ages should discover the unparalleled energies of genius in this work,

It will prove my most important doctrine — that the powers of the human mind must be developed in the education of thought and sense in the study of moral opinion, not arts and science.' Again, at p. 225 of his *Sophiometer*, he says: — 'The paramount thought that dwells in my mind incessantly is a question I put to myself — whether, in the event of my personal dissolution by death, I have communicated all the discoveries my unique mind possesses in the great master-science of man and nature.' In the next page he determines that he *has*, with the exception of one truth, — viz. 'the latent energy, physical and moral, of human nature as existing in the British people.' But here he was surely accusing himself without ground: for to my knowledge he has not failed in any one of his numerous works to insist upon this theme at least a billion of times. Another instance of his magnificent self-estimation is — that in the title pages of several of his works he announces himself as 'John Stewart, the only man of nature* that ever appeared in the world.'

By this time I am afraid the reader begins to suspect that he was crazy: and certainly, when I consider every thing, he must have been crazy when the wind was at NNE; for who but Walking Stewart ever dated his books by a computation drawn — not from the creation, not from the flood, not from Nabonassar, or *ab urbe conditâ*, not from the Hegira — but from

* In Bath he was surnamed 'the Child of Nature;' — which arose from his contrasting on every occasion the existing man of our present experience with the ideal or Stewartian man that might be expected to emerge in some myriads of ages; to which latter man he gave the name of the Child of Nature.

themselves, from their own day of publication, as constituting the one great era in the history of man by the side of which all other eras were frivolous and impertinent? Thus, in a work of his given to me in 1812 and probably published in that year, I find him incidentally recording of himself that he was at that time 'arrived at the age of sixty-three, with a firm state of health acquired by temperance, and a peace of mind almost independent of the vices of mankind -- because my knowledge of life has enabled me to place my happiness beyond the reach or contact of other men's follies and passions, by avoiding all family connections, and all ambitious pursuits of profit, fame, or power.' On reading this passage I was anxious to ascertain its date; but this, on turning to the title page, I found thus mysteriously expressed: 'In the 7000th year of Astronomical History, and the first day of Intellectual Life or Moral World, from the era of this work.' Another slight inclination of craziness appeared in a notion which obstinately haunted his mind that all the kings and rulers of the earth would confederate in every age against his works, and would hunt them out for extermination as keenly as Herod did the innocents in Bethlehem. On this consideration, fearing that they might be intercepted by the long arms of these wicked princes before they could reach that remote Stewartian man or his precursor to whom they were mainly addressed, he recommended to all those who might be impressed with a sense of their importance to bury a copy or copies of each work properly secured from damp, &c. at a depth of seven or eight feet below the surface of the earth; and on their death-beds to communicate the knowledge of this fact to some con

fidential friends, who in their turn were to send down the tradition to some discreet persons of the next generation; and thus, if the truth was not to be dispersed for many ages, yet the knowledge that here and there the truth lay buried on this and that continent, in secret spots on Mount Caucasus—in the sands of Biledulgerid—and in hiding-places amongst the forests of America, and was to rise again in some distant age and to vegetate and fructify for the universal benefit of man,—this knowledge at least was to be whispered down from generation to generation, and, in defiance of a myriad of kings crusading against him, Walking Stewart was to stretch out the influence of his writings through a long series of *λαμπροδοφοροί*⁷² to that child of nature whom he saw dimly through a vista of many centuries. If this were madness, it seemed to me a somewhat sublime madness: and I assured him of my co-operation against the kings, promising that I would bury ‘The Harp of Apollo’ in my own orchard in Grasmere at the foot of Mount Fairfield; that I would bury ‘The Apocalypse of Nature’ in one of the coves of Helvellyn, and several other works in several other places best known to myself. He accepted my offer with gratitude; but he then made known to me that he relied on my assistance for a still more important service—which was this: in the lapse of that vast number of ages which would probably intervene between the present period and the period at which his works would have reached their destination, he feared that the English language might itself have mouldered away. ‘No!’ I said, ‘that was not probable: considering its extensive diffusion; and that it was now transplanted into all

the continents of our planet, I would back the English language against any other on earth.' His own persuasion however was, that the Latin was destined to survive all other languages; it was to be the eternal as well as the universal language; and his desire was that I would translate his works, or some part of them, into that language.* This I promised; and I seriously designed at some leisure hour to translate into Latin a selection of passages which should embody an abstract of his philosophy. This would have been doing a service to all those who might wish to see a digest of his peculiar opinions cleared from the perplexities of his peculiar diction and brought into a narrow compass from the great number of volumes through which they are at present dispersed. However, like many another plan of mine, it went unexecuted.

On the whole, if Walking Stewart were at all crazy, he was so in a way which did not affect his natural genius and eloquence — but rather exalted them. The

* I was not aware until the moment of writing this passage that Walking Stewart had publicly made this request three years after making it to myself: opening the 'Harp of Apollo,' I have just now accidentally stumbled on the following passage, 'This stupendous work is destined, I fear, to meet a worse fate than the Aloe, which as soon as it blossoms loses its stalk. This first blossom of reason is threatened with the loss of both its stalk and its soil: for, if the revolutionary tyrant should triumph, he would destroy all the English books and energies of thought. I conjure my readers to translate this work into Latin, and to bury it in the ground, communicating on their death-beds only its place of concealment to men of nature.'

From the title page of this work, by the way, I learn that the 7000th year of Astronomical History' is taken from the Chinese tables, and coincides (as I had supposed) with the year 812 of our computation.

old maxim indeed, that 'Great wits to madness sure are near allied,' the maxim of Dryden and the popular maxim, I have heard disputed by Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Wordsworth, who maintain that mad people are the dullest and most wearisome of all people. As a body, I believe they are so. But I must dissent from the authority of Messrs. Coleridge and Wordsworth so far as to distinguish. Where madness is connected, as it often is, with some miserable derangement of the stomach, liver, &c. and attacks the principle of pleasurable life, which is manifestly seated in the central organs of the body (*i. e.* in the stomach and the apparatus connected with it), there it cannot but lead to perpetual suffering and distraction of thought; and there the patient will be often tedious and incoherent. People who have not suffered from any great disturbance in those organs are little aware how indispensable to the process of thinking are the momentary influxes of pleasurable feeling from the regular goings on of life in its primary function; in fact, until the pleasure is withdrawn or obscured, most people are not aware that they *have* any pleasure from the due action of the great central machinery of the system: proceeding in uninterrupted continuance, the pleasure as much escapes the consciousness as the act of respiration: a child, in the happiest state of its existence, does not *know* that it is happy. And generally whatsoever is the level state of the hourly feeling is never put down by the unthinking (*i. e.* by 99 out of 100) to the account of happiness: it is never put down with the positive sign, as equal to $+x$; but simply as $=0$. And men first become aware that it *was* a positive quantity, when they have lost it (*i. e.*

fallen into — *x*). Meantime the genial pleasure from the vital processes, though not represented to the consciousness, is *immanent* in every act — impulse — motion — word — and thought: and a philosopher sees that the idiots are in a state of pleasure, though they cannot see it themselves. Now I say that, where this principle of pleasure is not attached, madness is often little more than an enthusiasm highly exalted; the animal spirits are exuberant and in excess; and the madman becomes, if he be otherwise a man of ability and information, all the better as a companion. I have met with several such madmen; and I appeal to my brilliant friend, Professor W——, who is not a man to tolerate dulness in any quarter, and is himself the ideal of a delightful companion, whether he ever met a more amusing person than that madman who took a post-chaise with us from —— to Carlisle, long years ago, when he and I were hastening with the speed of fugitive felons to catch the Edinburgh mail. His fancy and his extravagance, and his furious attacks on Sir Isaac Newton, like Plato's suppers, refreshed us not only for that day but whenever they recurred to us; and we were both grieved when we heard some time afterwards from a Cambridge man that he had met our clever friend in a stage coach under the care of a brutal keeper. — Such a madness, if any, was the madness of Walking Stewart: his health was perfect; his spirits as light and ebullient as the spirits of a bird in spring-time; and his mind unagitated by painful thoughts, and at peace with itself. Hence, if he was not an amusing companion, it was because the philosophic direction of his thoughts made him something more. Of anecdotes and matters of fact he was no

communicative: of all that he had seen in the vast compass of his travels he never availed himself in conversation. I do not remember at this moment that he ever once alluded to his own travels in his intercourse with me except for the purpose of weighing down by a statement grounded on his own great personal experience an opposite statement of many hasty and misjudging travellers which he thought injurious to human nature: the statement was this, that in all his countless rencontres with uncivilized tribes, he had never met with any so ferocious and brutal as to attack an unarmed and defenceless man who was able to make them understand that he threw himself upon their hospitality and forbearance.

On the whole, Walking Stewart was a sublime visionary: he had seen and suffered much amongst men; yet not too much, or so as to dull the genial tone of his sympathy with the sufferings of others. His mind was a mirror of the sentient universe.—The whole mighty vision that had flitted before his eyes in this world, — the armies of Hyder-Ali and his son with oriental and barbaric pageantry, — the civic grandeur of England, the great deserts of Asia and America, — the vast capitals of Europe, — London with its eternal agitations, the ceaseless ebb and flow of its 'mighty heart,' — Paris shaken by the fierce torments of revolutionary convulsions, the silence of Lapland, and the solitary forests of Canada, with the swarming life of the torrid zone, together with innumerable recollections of individual joy and sorrow, that he had participated by sympathy — lay like a map beneath him, as if eternally co-præsent to his view; so that, in the contemplation of the prodigious whole, he had no leisure

to separate the parts, or occupy his mind with details. Hence came the monotony which the frivolous and the desultory would have found in his conversation. I, however, who am perhaps the person best qualified to speak of him, must pronounce him to have been a man of great genius; and, with reference to his conversation, of great eloquence. That these were not better known and acknowledged was owing to two disadvantages; one grounded in his imperfect education, the other in the peculiar structure of his mind. The first was this: like the late Mr. Shelley he had a fine vague enthusiasm and lofty aspirations in connection with human nature generally and its hopes; and like him he strove to give steadiness, a uniform direction, and an intelligible purpose to these feelings, by fitting to them a scheme of philosophical opinions. But unfortunately the philosophic system of both was so far from supporting their own views and the cravings of their own enthusiasm, that, as in some points it was baseless, incoherent, or unintelligible, so in others it tended to moral results, from which, if they had foreseen them, they would have been themselves the first to shrink as contradictory to the very purposes in which their system had originated. Hence, in maintaining their own system they both found themselves painfully entangled at times with tenets pernicious and degrading to human nature. These were the inevitable consequences of the *πρωτοι ψευδους** in their speculations; but were naturally charged upon them by those who looked carelessly into their books as opinions which not only for the sake of consistency they thought themselves bound to endure, but to which they gave the full weight of their sanction and patronage as to so many moving princi-

* The first or fundamental falsehood.

ples in their system. The other disadvantage under which Walking Stewart labored, was this: he was a man of genius, but not a man of talents; at least his genius was out of all proportion to his talents, and wanted an organ as it were for manifesting itself; so that his most original thoughts were delivered in a crude state — imperfect, obscure, half developed, and not producible to a popular audience. He was aware of this himself; and, though he claims everywhere the faculty of profound intuition into human nature, yet with equal candor he accuses himself of asinine stupidity, dulness, and want of talent. He was a disproportioned intellect, and so far a monster: and he must be added to the long list of original-minded men who have been looked down upon with pity and contempt by commonplace men of talent, whose powers of mind — though a thousand times inferior — were yet more manageable, and ran in channels more suited to common uses and common understandings.

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PROFESSOR WILSON.

THERE are many Newtons in England : yet, for a.l that there is but one Newton for earth and the children of earth ; which Newton is Isaac, and Kepler is his prophet.⁷³ There are many Wilsons in Scotland, and indeed many out of Scotland ; yet, for all that, Mother Earth and her children recognize but one, which one sits in the Edinburgh chair of Moral Philosophy. And, when *that* is said, all is said ; is there anything to say more ? Yes, there is an infinity to say, but no need to say it !

“Cætera norunt

Et Tagus, et Ganges, forsan et Antipodes.”

Such a radiance, which extinguishes all lesser lights, has its own evils. If a man like Mr. Touchwood of the *Hottle* in “St. Ronan’s Well” should find his way to *Tim-* (or to *Tom-*) *bucktoo*, no matter which, for *Tim* and *Tom* are very like each other (especially *Tim*) — in that case, he might have occasion to draw a bill upon England. And such a bill would assuredly find its way to its destination. The drawer of the bill might probably be intercepted on his homeward route, but the bill would *not*. Now, if this bill were drawn upon “John Wilson,” *tout court*, not a post-office in Christendom would scruple to forward it to the Professor. The Professor, in reply, would indorse upon it “*no effects.*” But in the end he would pay it, for his heart would

yearn with brotherly admiration towards a man who had thumped his way to the very navel of Africa.

This mention, by the way, of Timbuctoo, forced upon us by an illustration, suddenly reminds us that the Professor himself, in the stage of early manhood, was self-dedicated to the adventure of Timbuctoo. What reasons arose to disturb this African scheme, it is strange that we have forgotten or else that we have never heard. Possibly Major Houghton's fate may have recalled Wilson, in the midst of his youthful enthusiasm, to that natural but afflicting fear which, "like the raven o'er the infected house," sweeps at intervals over the martial hopes of most young soldiers, viz., the fear — not of death — but of death incurred for no commensurate return, and with no rememberable circumstances. To die, to die early, *that* belongs to the chances of the profession which the soldier has adopted. But to die as an *aide-de-camp* in the act of riding across a field of battle with some unimportant order that has not even been delivered — to feel that a sacrifice so vast for the sufferer will not stir a ripple on the surface of that mighty national interest for which the sacrifice has been made — this it is which, in such a case, makes the pang of dying. Wilson had seen Mungo Park; from him he must have learned the sort of razor's-edge on which the traveller walks in the interior of Africa. The trackless forest, the unbridged river, the howling wilderness, the fierce Mahometan bigotry of the Moor, the lawlessness of the Pagan native, the long succession of petty despots — looking upon you with cruel contempt if you travel as a poor man, looking upon you with respect, but as a godsend, ripe for wrecking, if you

travel as a rich one — all these chances of ruin, with the climate superadded, leave too little of rational hopefulness to such an enterprise for sustaining those genial spirits, without which nothing of that nature can prosper. A certain proportion of anxiety, or even of gloomy fear, is a stimulant: but in this excess they become killing as the frost of Labrador. Or, if not, only where a man has a demon within him. Such a demon had Park.⁷⁴ And a far mightier demon had Wilson, but, luckily for us all, a demon that haunted the mind with objects more thoroughly intellectual.

Wilson was born, we believe, in Paisley. It is the Scottish custom, through the want of great public schools for the higher branches of education, that universities, to their own great injury, are called upon to undertake the functions of schools. It follows from this, that mere schoolboys are in Scotland sent to college; whereas, on our English system, none go to Oxford or Cambridge but young men ranging from eighteen to twenty. Agreeably to this Scottish usage, Wilson was sent at a boyish age to the university of Glasgow, and for some years was placed under the care of Professor Jardine. From Glasgow, and, we believe, in his eighteenth year, he was transferred to Oxford. The college which he selected was Magdalen, of which college Addison had been an *alumnus*. Here he entered as a *gentleman-commoner*, and, in fact, could not do otherwise; for Magdalen receives no others, except, indeed, those who are on the foundation, and who come thither by right of election. The very existence of such a class as gentlemen-commoners has been angrily complained of, as an undue concession of license, or privi-

lege, or distinction to mere wealth, when all distinction should naturally rise out of learning or intellectual superiority. But the institution had probably a laudable and a wise origin. The elder sons of wealthy families, who needed no professional employments, had no particular motive for resorting to the universities; and one motive they had against it — viz. that they must thus come under a severer code of discipline than when living at home. In order, therefore, to conciliate this class, and to attract them into association with those who would inevitably give them some tincture of literary tastes and knowledge, an easier yoke, as regarded attendance upon lectures and other college exercises, was imposed upon all who, by assuming the higher expenditure of *gentlemen-commoners*,⁷⁵ professed themselves to be rich enough for living without a profession. The purpose had been, as we have no doubt, to diffuse the liberalities of literature throughout the great body of the landed aristocracy; and for many generations, as it would be easy to show, that object had been respectably accomplished; for our old traditional portrait of the English country gentleman, from Fielding downwards to this ultra-democratic day, is a vulgar libel and a lie of malice. So far from being the bigoted and obtuse order described in popular harangues, the landed gentry of England has ever been the wisest order amongst us, and much ahead of the commercial body.

From Oxford, on returning to Scotland, Wilson rejoined his mother, then living in Queen Street, Edinburgh. He adopted the law as his nominal profession, with no fixed resolution, perhaps, to practise it. About 1814, we believe, he was called to the bar. In 1818,

he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; and, we think, it was in the previous year that "Blackwood's Magazine" was established, which, from the seventh number downwards (though latterly by intermitting fits), has continued to draw more memorable support from *him* than ever journal did from the pen of an individual writer. He was not the editor of that journal at any time. The late Mr. Blackwood, a sagacious and energetic man, was his own editor; but Wilson was its intellectual Atlas, and very probably, in one sense, its creator — viz. that he might be the first suggester (as undoubtedly he was at one time the sole executive realizer) of that great innovating principle started by this journal, under which it oscillated pretty equally between human life on the one hand, and literature on the other.

Out of these magazine articles has been drawn the occasion of a grave reproach to Professor Wilson. Had he, it is said, thrown the same weight of energy and the same fiery genius into a less desultory shape, it is hard to compute how enormous and systematic a book he might have written. *That* is true: had he worked a little at the book every day of his life, on the principle of the Greek painter — *nulla dies sine linea* — by this time the book would have towered into that altitude as to require long ladders and scaffoldings for studying it; and, like the Vicar of Wakefield's family picture, could find its way into no human chambers without pulling down the sides of the house. In the vot-notes, where the street lamps would keep him in order, the Professor might have carried on soberly enough. But in the upper part of the page, where he

would feel himself striding away *in nubibus*, oh gemmini! what larkings there would have been, what sprees with the Aurora Borealis! What a rise he would have taken out of us poor wretches below! The man in the moon would have been frightened into *apogee* by the menaces of the crutch. And, after all, the book never *could* have been suffered to stay at home; it must have been exported to central Asia on Dr. Johnson's principle, who said to Miss Knight,⁷⁶ a young Englishwoman of very large dimensions, when she communicated to the doctor her design to live on the Continent, "Do, my dear, by all means — really you are too big for an island." Certainly, awful thoughts of capsizing flit across the fancy, when one sees too vast a hulk shipped on board our tight little Britannic ark. But, speaking seriously, the whole doctrine, from which exhales this charge against the Professor of misapplied powers, calls for revision. Wise was that old Grecian who said — Μεγα βιβλιον, μεγα κακον — Big book, big nuisance! For books are the military "baggage" of the human understanding in its endless march. And what is baggage? Once in a hundred times it ministers to our marching necessities; but for the other ninety-nine times it embarrasses the agility of our movement. And the Romans, therefore, who are the oldest and the best authorities on all military questions, expressed the upshot of these conflicting tendencies in the legionary baggage by calling it *impedimenta*, mere hindrances. They tolerated it, and why did they do *that*? Because, in the case 99 + 1 the baggage might happen to be absolutely indispensable. For the mere possibility of **that** one case, which, *when* it came, would not be evaded,

they endured what was a nuisance through all the other cases. But they took a comic revenge by deriving the name from the ninety-nine cases where the baggage was a nuisance, rather than from the hundredth where it might chance to be the salvation of the army. To the author of every big book, so far from regarding him as a benefactor, the torture ought to be administered instantly by this interrogative dilemma: Is there anything new (which is not false) in your book? If he says "*No*," then you have a man, by his own confession, ripe for the gallows. If he says "*Yes*," then you reply: What a wretch in that case must you be, that have hidden a thing, which you suppose important to mankind, in that great wilderness of a book, where I and other honest men must spend half a life in running about to find it! It is, beside, the remark of a clever French writer in our own days, that hardly any of the cardinal works, upon which revolve the capital interests of man, are large works. Plato, for instance, has but one of his many works large enough to fill a small *octavo*. Aristotle, as to bulk, is a mere pamphleteer, if you except perhaps four works; and each of those might easily be crowded into a *duodecimo*. Neither Shakspeare nor Milton has written any long work. Newton's "*Principia*," indeed, makes a small quarto; but this arises from its large type and its diagrams: it might be printed in a pocket shape. And, besides all this, even when a book *is* a large one, we usually become acquainted with it but by extracts or by abstracts and abridgments. All poets of any length are read by matches and fragments, when once they have ascended to great popularity; so that the logic of the reproach

against Professor Wilson is like that logic which Mr. Bald, the Scottish engineer, complained of in the female servants of Edinburgh. "They insist," said he, "upon having large blocks of coal furnished to them; they will not put up with any that are less: and yet every morning the Cynic, who delights in laughing at female caprices, may hear these same women down in areas braying to pieces the unmanageable blocks, and using severe labor, for no purpose on earth but at last to bring the coal into that very state in which, without any labor at all, they might have had it from our collieries." So of Professor Wilson's works — they lie now in short and detached papers — that is, in the very state fitted for reading; and, if he had harkened to his counsellors, they would have been conglutinated into one vast block, needing a quarryman's or a miner's skill to make them tractable for household use.

In so hasty a sketch of Professor Wilson, where it is inevitable to dismiss without notice much that is interesting, there is yet one aspect of his public pretensions which, having been unusually misrepresented, ought to be brought under a stronger light of examination: we mean his relation to the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. It is sometimes alleged, in disparagement of Professor Wilson, by comparison with his two immediate predecessors, Mr. Dugald Stewart and Dr. Thomas Brown, that *they* did, but that he does *not*, come forward with original contributions to philosophy. He is allowed the credit of lecturing splendidly; but the complaint is, that he does not place his own name on the roll of independent philosophers. There is some opening to

demurs in this invidious statement, even as regards the facts. The quality of Wilson's lectures cannot be estimated, except by those who have attended them, as none have been made public. On the other hand, Mr. Dugald Stewart and Dr. Thomas Brown are *not* the original philosophers which the objection supposes them. To have been multiplied, through repeated editions, is no argument even of notoriety or momentary acceptance; for these editions, both at home and in America, have been absorbed by students, on whom it was compulsory to become purchasers of the books used in their academic studies. At present, when it has almost ceased to be any recommendation to these writers that once they belonged to the Whig party, and when their personal connections are fast disappearing, it is no longer doubtful that the interest in their works is undermined. Professor Ferrier of St. Andrews, one of the subtlest intellects in modern speculation, has found himself compelled to speak with severity of both; and since then, in his edition of Reid, Sir William Hamilton (who chooses to lay himself under some restraint in reference to Mr. Stewart) has not scrupled to speak with open disrespect of Dr. Brown; once as regards a case of plagiarism; once upon that vast unbrageousness of superfluous wordiness which is so distressing to all readers of his works. Even the reputation, therefore, of these men shows signs of giving way. But that is nothing: on other grounds, and in defiance of reputation the most flourishing, we have always felt that the first battery of sound logic unmasked against Dr. Brown must be fatal. That man *could* not be a philosopher who wrote the preposterous

paper against Kant in an early number of the "Edinburgh Review." In reviewing a Prussian, he had not even mastered the German language, and was indebted to a Frenchman for the monstrous conceits which he imputed to the great founder of the critical philosophy. Mr. Dugald Stewart is so much the less vulnerable as he happens to be the more eclectic; in the little that is strictly his own, he is *not* less vulnerable. And it embitters the resentment against these men, that both spoke with unmeasured illiberality, and with entire ignorance of philosophers the most distinguished in the last century.

From these men, at least, Professor Wilson will have nothing to fear. He, which is a great blessing, will have nothing to *recant*; and assuredly, that man who has ever been the most generous of literary men, and sometimes the most magnanimous and self-conquering in estimating the merits of his contemporaries, will never cause a blush upon the faces of his descendants, by putting it in the power of an enemy to upbraid them with unbecoming language of scorn applied by *him* to illustrious extenders of knowledge. "If," will be the language of those descendants, "if our ancestor *did*, as a professor, write nothing more than splendid abstracts of philosophy in its several sections, in other words a history of philosophy, even *that* is something beyond a vulgar valuation — a service to philosophy which few, indeed, have ever been in a condition to attempt. Even so, no man can doubt that he would be found a thousand times more impressive than the dull, though most respectable, Brucker, than Tennemann, than Tiedemann (not Tedionsmann), than Buhle, and so forth.

If he did no more than cause to transmigrate into new forms old or neglected opinions, it is not certain that in this office the philosopher, whom custom treats as the secondary mind, does not often transcend his principal. It is, at least, beyond a doubt that Jeremy Taylor and Paul Richter, both of whom Professor Wilson at times recalls, often times, in reporting an opinion from an old cloistered casuist, or from a dyspeptic schoolman blinking upon Aristotle with a farthing rushlight, lighted it up with a triple glory of haloes, such as the dull originator could never have comprehended. If therefore," it will be said, "Professor Wilson did no more than reanimate the fading and exorcise the dead, even *so* his station as a philosopher is not necessarily a lower one."

True; but upon *that* a word or two. We have been hitherto assuming for facts the allegations put forward — sometimes by the careless, sometimes by the interested and malignant. Now let us look out for another version of the facts.

Our own version we beg to introduce by a short preface. The British universities *are*, but the German universities are *not*, connected with the maintenance of the national faith. The reasons of this difference rest upon historical and political grounds. But the *consequences* of this difference are, that the British professor in any faculty bearing on theology is under conscientious restraints, which a little further on we will explain, such as the German professor does not recognize, and is not by any public summons called upon to recognize.

It is ordinarily supposed, and no person has argued the case upon that footing with more bitterness or more

narrowness of view than Lord Brougham, that Oxford, when imposing a subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, means or wishes to lay a restraint upon the free movement of the subscriber's intellect. But the true theory of that exaction is this — that Oxford, aiming at no such flagrant impossibility, seeks to bind over the student, by obligations of honor and by reverence for the sanctity of a promise, to do — what? Is it that he will not stray in thought beyond the limits staked out by the Thirty-nine Articles? *That* is a promise which no man could be sure of keeping; a promise, therefore, which an honest man would not deliberately make, and which, for the same reason, no honest body of men would seek to exact. Not this, not the promise to believe as the Church of England believes, but the promise that he will not publish or manifest his secret aberrations from this standard, is the promise involved in the student's subscription. Now, mark the effects of this. Oxford has thus preoccupied the mind of the student with a resisting force as regards the heaviest temptation to tamper with dangerous forms of opinion, religious or irreligious, during that period when the judgment is most rash, and the examination most limited. The heaviest temptation lies through the vanity connected with the conscious eccentricity and hardihood of bold free-thinking. But this vanity cannot be gratified in Oxford; it is doomed to be starved, unless through a criminal breach of fidelity to engagements solemnly contracted. That oath, which, and which only, was sacred in the eyes of a chivalrous French king, viz. *Foi du gentilhomme*, is thus made to reinforce and rivet the oath (more bind-

ing, as might seem, but under the circumstances far less so) of *Foi du chretien*. For a case of conscientious conviction may be imagined which would liberate the student from this latter oath applied to his *creed*; but no case can be imagined which would liberate him from the other oath, enforcing the obligation to silence. Oxford, therefore, applies a twofold check to any free-thinking pruriencies in the student's mind: 1st, She quells them summarily, *à parte post*, by means of the guarantee which she holds from him; 2dly, She silently represses the growth of such pruriencies, *à parte ante*, by exacting bonds against all available uses of such dalliyings with heresy or infidelity. Now, on the other hand, in the German universities generally, these restraints on excesses of free-thinking do not exist. The course of study leads, at every point, into religious questions, or questions applicable to religion. All modes of philosophical speculation, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, connect themselves with religion. There is no interdict or embargo laid upon the wildest novelties, in this direction. The English subscription had been meant to operate simply in that way; simply to secure an *armistitium*, a suspension of feuds, in a place where such feuds were disrespectful to the institutions of the land, or might be perilous — and in a stage of life when they would too often operate as pledges given prematurely by young men to opinions which afterwards, in riper intellect, they might see reason, but not have the candor or the courage to abandon.

It follows, from this state of things, that a German professor is thrown upon his discretion and his own in-

individual conscience for the quality of his teaching. But the British professor is thrown upon a public conscience, embodied in usages adapted to the institutions of his country. In Edinburgh, it is true, the students are not bound by subscriptions to any Confession of Faith. But that the whole course of instruction, or at least of that instruction which emanates from the chair of Moral Philosophy, is understood to be connected with the religion of the land, appears from this — that the theological students — those who are to fill the ministerial office in the churches of Scotland — cannot arrive at that station without a certificate of having attended the Moral Philosophy Lectures. There is, therefore, a secret understanding which imposes upon the professor a duty of adapting his lectures to this call upon him. He is not left at liberty to amuse himself with scholastic subtleties; and those who *have* done so, should be viewed as deserters of their duty. He is called upon to give such a *representative* account of current philosophy as may lay open those amongst its treasures which are most in harmony with Christian wisdom, and may arm the future clergyman against its most contagious errors. For Fichte or for Schelling the path was open to mere Athenian subtlety upon any subject that might most tax their own ingenuity, or that of their hearers. But the British professor of moral philosophy is straitened by more solemn obligations: —

“Nobis non licet esse tam disertis,
Qui musas colimus severiores.”

Hence it would be no just blame, but the highest praise, to Professor Wilson, if his lectures really *did*

wear the character imputed to him — of being rich and eloquent abstracts, rather than scholastic exertions in untried paths. We speak in the dark as to the facts; but at the same time we offer a new version, a new mode of interpreting, the alleged facts — supposing them to have been accurately stated.

Is *that* all? No; there is another, and a far ampler philosophy — a philosophy of human nature, like the philosophy of Shakspeare, and of Jeremy Taylor, and of Edmund Burke, which is scattered through the miscellaneous papers of Professor Wilson. Such philosophy by its very nature is of a far higher and more aspiring nature than any which lingers upon mere scholastic conundrums. It is a philosophy that cannot be presented in *abstract* forms, but hides itself as an *incarnation* in voluminous mazes of eloquence and poetic feeling. Look for this amongst the *critical* essays of Professor Wilson, which, for continual glimpses and revelations of hidden truth, are perhaps absolutely unmatched. By such philosophy, his various courses of lectures — we speak on the authority of many of his highest students — are throughout distinguished; and more especially those numerous disquisitions on Man's Moral Being, his Passions, his Affections, and his Imagination, in which Professor Wilson displays his own genius — its originality and power.

With this brief sketch of one who walks in the van of men the most memorable and original that have adorned our memorable and original age, we conclude by saying, in a spirit of simplicity and fidelity to the truth, that from Professor Wilson's papers in "Blackwood," but above all from his meditative examinations

of great poets, Greek and English, may be formed a *florilegium* of thoughts, the most profound and the most gorgeously illustrated that exist in human composition.

Of his poems or his prose tales, we have not spoken : our space was limited ; and, as regards the poems in particular, there appeared some time ago in this very journal ¹ a separate critique upon them, from whom proceeding we know not, but executed with great feeling and ability.

¹ Hogg's Instructor.

GOETHE.

JOHN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, a man of commanding influence in the literature of modern Germany throughout the latter half of his long life, and possessing two separate claims upon our notice; one in right of his own unquestionable talents; and another much stronger, though less direct, arising out of his position, and the extravagant partisanship put forward on his behalf for the last forty years. The literary body in all countries, and for reasons which rest upon a sounder basis than that of private jealousies, have always been disposed to a republican simplicity in all that regards the assumption of rank and personal pretensions. *Valeat quantum valere potest*, is the form of license to every man's ambition, coupled with its caution. Let his influence and authority be commensurate with his attested value; and because no man in the present infirmity of human speculation, and the present multiplicity of human power can hope for more than a very limited superiority, there is an end at once to all *absolute* dictatorship. The dictatorship in any case could be only *relative*, and in relation to a single department of art or knowledge; and this for a reason stronger even than that already noticed, viz., the vast extent of the field on which the intellect is now summoned to employ itself. That objection, as it applies only to the *degree* of the difficulty, might be met by a corresponding de-

gree of mental energy ; such a thing may be supposed, at least. But another difficulty there is of a profounder character which cannot be so easily parried. Those who have reflected at all upon the fine arts, know that power of one kind is often inconsistent, positively incompatible with power of another kind. For example, the *dramatic* mind is incompatible with the *epic*. And though we should consent to suppose that some intellect might arise endowed upon a scale of such angelic comprehensiveness, as to vibrate equally and indifferently towards either pole, still it is next to impossible, in the exercise and culture of the two powers, but some bias must arise which would give that advantage to the one over the other which the right arm has over the left. But the supposition, the very case put, is baseless, and countenanced by no precedent. Yet, under this previous difficulty, and with regard to a literature convulsed, if any ever was, by an almost total anarchy, it is a fact notorious to all who take an interest in Germany and its concerns, that Goethe did in one way or other, through the length and breadth of that vast country, establish a supremacy of influence wholly unexampled ; a supremacy indeed perilous in a less honorable man, to those whom he might chance to hate, and with regard to himself thus far unfortunate, that it conferred upon every work proceeding from his pen a sort of papal indulgence, an immunity from criticism, or even from the appeals of good sense, such as it is not wholesome that any man should enjoy. Yet we repeat that German literature was and is in a condition of total anarchy. With this solitary exception, no name, even in the most narrow section of knowledge or of power, has ever been able in that country to

challenge unconditional reverence; whereas, with us and in France, name the science, name the art, and we will name the dominant professor; a difference which partly arises out of the fact that England and France are governed in their opinions by two or three capital cities, whilst Germany looks for its leadership to as many cities as there are *residenzen* and universities. For instance, the little territory with which Goethe was connected presented no less than two such public lights; Weimar, the *residenz* or privileged abode of the Grand Duke, and Jena, the university founded by that house. Partly, however, this difference may be due to the greater restlessness, and to the greater energy as respects mere speculation, of the German mind. But no matter whence arising, or how interpreted, the fact is what we have described; absolute confusion, the 'anarch old' of Milton, is the one deity whose sceptre is there paramount; and yet *there* it was, in that very realm of chaos, that Goethe built his throne. That he must have looked with trepidation and perplexity upon his wild empire and its 'dark foundations,' may be supposed. The tenure was uncertain to *him* as regarded its duration; to us it is equally uncertain, and in fact mysterious, as regards its origin. Meantime the mere fact, contrasted with the general tendencies of the German literary world, is sufficient to justify a notice, somewhat circumstantial, of the man in whose favor, whether naturally by force of genius, or by accident concurring with intrigue, so unexampled a result was effected.

Goethe was born at noonday on the 28th of August, 1749, in his father's house at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. The circumstances of his birth were thus far remark-

able, that, unless Goethe's vanity deceived him, they led to a happy revolution hitherto retarded by female delicacy falsely directed. From some error of the midwife who attended his mother, the infant Goethe appeared to be still-born. Sons there were as yet none from this marriage; everybody was therefore interested in the child's life; and the panic which arose in consequence, having survived its immediate occasion, was improved into a public resolution, (for which no doubt society stood ready at that moment,) to found some course of public instruction from this time forward for those who undertook professionally the critical duties of accoucheur.

We have noticed the house in which Goethe was born, as well as the city. Both were remarkable, and fitted to leave lasting impressions upon a young person of sensibility. As to the city, its antiquity is not merely venerable, but almost mysterious; towers were at that time to be found in the mouldering lines of its earliest defences, which belonged to the age of Charlemagne, or one still earlier; battlements adapted to a mode of warfare anterior even to that of feudalism or romance. The customs, usages, and local privileges of Frankfort, and the rural districts adjacent, were of a corresponding character. Festivals were annually celebrated at a short distance from the walls, which had descended from a dateless antiquity. Everything which met the eye spoke the language of elder ages; whilst the river on which the place was seated, its great fair, which still held the rank of the greatest in Christendom, and its connection with the throne of Cæsar and his inauguration, by giving to Frankfort an interest and a public character in the eyes of all Germany,

had the effect of countersigning, as it were, by state authority, the importance which she otherwise challenged to her ancestral distinctions. Fit house for such a city, and in due keeping with the general scenery, was that of Goethe's father. It had in fact been composed out of two contiguous houses ; that accident had made it spacious and rambling in its plan ; whilst a further irregularity had grown out of the original difference in point of level between the corresponding stories of the two houses, making it necessary to connect the rooms of the same *suite* by short flights of steps. Some of these features were no doubt removed by the recast of the house under the name of 'repairs,' (to evade a city by-law,) afterwards executed by his father ; but such was the house of Goethe's infancy, and in all other circumstances of style and furnishing equally antique.

The spirit of society in Frankfort, without a court, a university, or a learned body of any extent, or a resident nobility in its neighborhood, could not be expected to display any very high standard of polish. Yet, on the other hand, as an independent city, governed by its own separate laws and tribunals, (that privilege of *autonomy* so dearly valued by ancient Greece,) and possessing besides a resident corps of jurists and of agents in various ranks for managing the interests of the German emperor and other princes, Frankfort had the means within herself of giving a liberal tone to the pursuits of her superior citizens, and of co-operating in no inconsiderable degree with the general movement of the times, political or intellectual. The memoirs of Goethe himself, and in particular the picture there given of his own family, as well as other

contemporary glimpses of German domestic society in those days, are sufficient to show that much knowledge, much true cultivation of mind, much sound refinement of taste, were then distributed through the middle classes of German society; meaning by that very indeterminate expression those classes which for Frankfort composed the aristocracy, viz., all who had daily leisure, and regular funds for employing it to advantage. It is not necessary to add, because that is a fact applicable to all stages of society, that Frankfort presented many and various specimens of original talent, moving upon all directions of human speculation.

Yet, with this general allowance made for the capacities of the place, it is too evident that, for the most part, they lay inert and undeveloped. In many respects Frankfort resembled an English cathedral city, according to the standard of such places seventy years ago, not, that is to say, like Carlisle in this day, where a considerable manufacture exists, but like Chester as it is yet. The chapter of a cathedral, the resident ecclesiastics attached to the duties of so large an establishment, men always well educated, and generally having families, compose the original *nucleus*, around which soon gathers all that part of the local gentry who, for any purpose, whether of education for their children, or of social enjoyment for themselves, seek the advantages of a town. Hither resort all the timid old ladies who wish for conversation, or other forms of social amusement; hither resort the valetudinarians, male or female, by way of commanding superior medical advice at a cost not absolutely ruinous to themselves; and multitudes besides, with narrow incomes, to whom these quiet retreats are so many cities of refuge.

Such, in one view, they really are; and yet in another they have a vicious constitution. Cathedral cities in England, imperial cities without manufactures in Germany, are all in an improgressive condition. The amount of superior families oscillates rather than changes; that is, it fluctuates within fixed limits; and, for all inferior families, being composed either of shopkeepers or of menial servants, they are determined by the number, or, which, on a large average, is the same, by the pecuniary power, of their employers. Hence it arises, that room is made for one man, in whatever line of dependence, only by the death of another; and the constant increments of the population are carried off into other cities. Not less is the difference of such cities as regards the standard of manners. How striking is the soft and urbane tone of the lower orders in a cathedral city, or in a watering-place dependent upon ladies, contrasted with the bold, often insolent demeanor of a self-dependent artisan or mutinous mechanic of Manchester and Glasgow.

Children, however, are interested in the state of society around them, chiefly as it affects their parents. Those of Goethe were respectable, and perhaps tolerably representative of the general condition in their own rank. An English authoress of great talent, in her *Characteristics of Goethe*, has too much countenanced the notion that he owed his intellectual advantages exclusively to his mother. Of this there is no proof. His mother wins more esteem from the reader of this day, because she was a cheerful woman of serene temper, brought into advantageous comparison with a husband much older than herself, whom circumstances had rendered moody, fitful, sometimes capricious, and

confessedly obstinate in that degree which Pope has taught us to think connected with inveterate error :

‘Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,’

unhappily presents an association too often actually occurring in nature, to leave much chance for error in presuming either quality from the other. And, in fact, Goethe's father was so uniformly obstinate in pressing his own views upon all who belonged to him, whenever he did come forward in an attitude of activity, that his family had much reason to be thankful for the rarity of such displays. Fortunately for them, his indolence neutralized his obstinacy. And the worst shape in which his troublesome temper showed itself, was in what concerned the religious reading of the family. Once begun, the worst book as well as the best, the longest no less than the shortest, was to be steadfastly read through to the last word of the last volume ; no excess of yawning availed to obtain a reprieve, not, adds his son, though he were himself the leader of the yawners. As an illustration he mentions Bowyer's *History of the Popes* ; which awful series of records, the catacombs, as it were, in the palace of history, were actually traversed from one end to the other of the endless *suite* by the unfortunate house of Goethe. Allowing, however, for the father's unamiableness in this one point, upon all intellectual ground both parents seem to have met very much upon a level. Two illustrations may suffice, one of which occurred during the infancy of Goethe. The science of education was at that time making its first rude motions towards an ampler development ; and, amongst other reforms then floating in the general mind, was one for eradicating the child-

ish fear of ghosts, &c. The young Goethes, as it happened, slept not in separate beds only, but in separate rooms; and not unfrequently the poor children, under the stinging terrors of their lonely situation, stole away from their 'forms,' to speak in the hunter's phrase, and sought to rejoin each other. But in these attempts they were liable to surprises from the enemy; papa and mamma were both on the alert, and often intercepted the young deserter by a cross march or an ambuscade; in which cases each had a separate policy for enforcing obedience. The father, upon his general system of 'perseverance,' compelled the fugitive back to his quarters, and, in effect, exhorted him to persist in being frightened out of his wits. To his wife's gentle heart that course appeared cruel, and she reclaimed the delinquent by bribes; the peaches which her garden walls produced being the fund from which she chiefly drew her supplies for this branch of the secret service. What were her winter bribes, when the long nights would seem to lie heaviest on the exchequer, is not said. Speaking seriously, no man of sense can suppose that a course of suffering from terrors the most awful, under whatever influence supported, whether under the naked force of compulsion, or of *that* connected with bribes, could have any final effect in mitigating the passion of awe, connected, by our very dreams, with the shadowy and the invisible, or in tranquillizing the infantine imagination.

A second illustration involves a great moral event in the history of Goethe, as it was, in fact, the first occasion of his receiving impressions at war with his religious creed. Piety is so beautiful an ornament of the youthful mind, doubt or distrust so unnatural a

growth from confiding innocence, that an infant free-thinker is heard of not so much with disgust as with perplexity. A sense of the ludicrous is apt to intermingle; and we lose our natural horror of the result in wonder at its origin. Yet in this instance there is no room for doubt; the fact and the occasion are both on record; there can be no question about the date; and, finally, the accuser is no other than the accused. Goethe's own pen it is which proclaims, that already, in the early part of his seventh year, his reliance upon God as a moral governor had suffered a violent shock, was shaken, if not undermined. On the 1st of November, 1755, occurred the great earthquake at Lisbon. Upon a double account, this event occupied the thoughts of all Europe for an unusual term of time; both as an expression upon a larger scale than usual of the mysterious physical agency concerned in earthquakes, and also for the awful human tragedy* which attended either the earthquake itself, or its immediate sequel in the sudden irruption of the Tagus. Sixty thousand persons, victims to the dark power in its first or its second *avatar*, attested the Titanic scale upon which it worked. Here it was that the shallow piety of the Germans found a stumbling-block. Those who have read any circumstantial history of the physical

* Of this no picture can ever hope to rival that hasty one sketched in the letter of the chaplain to the Lisbon factory. The plague of Athens as painted by Thucydides or Lucretius, nay even the fabulous plague of London by De Foe, contain no scenes or situations equal in effect to some in this plain historic statement. Nay, it would perhaps be difficult to produce a passage from Ezekiel, from Æschylus, or from Shakspeare, which would so profoundly startle the sense of sublimity as one or two of his incidents.

signs which preceded this earthquake, are aware that in England and Northern Germany many singular phenomena were observed, more or less manifestly connected with the same dark agency which terminated at Lisbon, and running before this final catastrophe at times so accurately varying with the distances, as to furnish something like a scale for measuring the velocity with which it moved. These German phenomena, circulated rapidly over all Germany by the journals of every class, had seemed to give to the Germans a nearer and more domestic interest in the great event, than belonged to them merely in their universal character of humanity. It is also well known to observers of national characteristics, that amongst the Germans the household charities, the *pieties of the hearth*, as they may be called, exist, if not really in greater strength, yet with much less of the usual balances or restraints. A German father, for example, is like the grandfather of other nations; and thus a piety, which in its own nature scarcely seems liable to excess, takes, in its external aspect, too often an air of effeminate imbecility. These two considerations are necessary to explain the intensity with which this Lisbon tragedy laid hold of the German mind, and chiefly under the one single aspect of its *undistinguishing* fury. Women, children, old men — these, doubtless, had been largely involved in the perishing sixty thousand; and that reflection, it would seem from Goethe's account, had so far embittered the sympathy of the Germans with their distant Portuguese brethren, that, in the Frankfort discussions, sullen murmurs had gradually ripened into bold impeachments of Providence. There can be no gloomier form of infidelity

than that which questions the moral attributes of the Great Being, in whose hands are the final destinies of us all. Such, however, was the form of Goethe's earliest scepticism, such its origin; caught up from the very echoes which rang through the streets of Frankfort when the subject occupied all men's minds. And such, for anything that appears, continued to be its form thenceforwards to the close of his life, if speculations so crude could be said to have any form at all. Many are the analogies, some close ones, between England and Germany with regard to the circle of changes they have run through, political or social, for a century back. The challenges are frequent to a comparison; and sometimes the result would be to the advantage of Germany, more often to ours. But in religious philosophy, which in reality is the true *popular* philosophy, how vast is the superiority on the side of this country. Not a shopkeeper or mechanic, we may venture to say, but would have felt this obvious truth, that surely the Lisbon earthquake yielded no fresh lesson, no peculiar moral, beyond what belonged to every man's experience in every age. A passage in the New Testament about the fall of the tower of Siloam, and the just construction of that event, had already anticipated the difficulty, if such it could be thought. Not to mention, that calamities upon the same scale in the earliest age of Christianity, the fall of the amphitheatre at Fidenæ, or the destruction of Pompeii, had presented the same problem as the Lisbon earthquake. Nay, it is presented daily in the numblest individual case, where wrong is triumphant over right, or innocence confounded with guilt in one common disaster. And that the parents of Goethe

should have authorized his error, if only by their silence, argues a degree of ignorance in them, which could not have co-existed with much superior knowledge in the public mind.

Goethe, in his Memoirs, (Book vi.,) commends his father for the zeal with which he superintended the education of his children. But apparently it was a zeal without knowledge. Many things were taught imperfectly, but all casually, and as chance suggested them. Italian was studied a little, because the elder Goethe had made an Italian tour, and had collected some Italian books, and engravings by Italian masters. Hebrew was studied a little, because Goethe the son had a fancy for it, partly with a view to theology, and partly because there was a Jewish quarter, gloomy and sequestered, in the city of Frankfort. French offered itself no doubt on many suggestions, but originally on occasion of a French theatre, supported by the staff of the French army when quartered in the same city. Latin was gathered in a random way from a daily sense of its necessity. English upon the temptation of a stranger's advertisement, promising upon moderate terms to teach that language in four weeks; a proof, by the way, that the system of bold innovations in the art of tuition had already commenced. Riding and fencing were also attempted under masters apparently not very highly qualified, and in the same desultory style of application. Dancing was taught to his family, strange as it may seem, by Mr. Goethe himself. There is good reason to believe that not one of all these accomplishments was possessed by Goethe, when ready to visit the university, in a degree which made it practically of any use to him. Drawing and

music were pursued confessedly as amusements; and it would be difficult to mention any attainment whatsoever which Goethe had carried to a point of excellence in the years which he spent under his father's care, unless it were his mastery over the common artifices of metre and the common topics of rhetoric, which fitted him for writing what are called occasional poems and *impromptus*. This talent he possessed in a remarkable degree, and at an early age; but he owed its cultivation entirely to himself.

In a city so orderly as Frankfort, and in a station privileged from all the common hardships of poverty, it can hardly be expected that many incidents should arise, of much separate importance in themselves, to break the monotony of life; and the mind of Goethe was not contemplative enough to create a value for common occurrences through any peculiar impressions which he had derived from them. In the years 1763 and 1764, when he must have been from fourteen to fifteen years old, Goethe witnessed the inauguration and coronation of a king of the Romans, a solemn spectacle connected by prescription with the city of Frankfort. He describes it circumstantially, but with very little feeling, in his Memoirs. Probably the prevailing sentiment, on looking back at least to this transitory splendor of dress, processions, and ceremonial forms, was one of cynical contempt. But this he could not express, as a person closely connected with a German court, and without giving much and various offence. It is with some timidity even that he hazards a criticism upon single parts of the costume adopted by some of the actors in that gorgeous scene. White silk stockings, and pumps of the common form, he

objects to as out of harmony with the antique and heraldic aspects of the general costume, and ventures to suggest either boots or sandals as an improvement. Had Goethe felt himself at liberty from all restraints of private consideration in composing these memoirs, can it be doubted that he would have taken his retrospect of this Frankfort inauguration from a different station; from the station of that stern revolution which, within his own time and partly under his own eyes, had shattered the whole imperial system of thrones, in whose equipage this gay pageant made so principal a figure, had humbled Cæsar himself to the dust, and left him an emperor without an empire? We at least, for our parts, could not read without some emotion one little incident of these gorgeous scenes recorded by Goethe, namely, that when the emperor, on rejoining his wife for a few moments, held up to her notice his own hands and arms arrayed in the antique habiliments of Charlemagne, Maria Theresa — she whose children were summoned to so sad a share in the coming changes — gave way to sudden bursts of loud laughter, audible to the whole populace below her. That laugh, on surveying the departing pomps of Charlemagne, must, in any contemplative ear, have rung with a sound of deep significance, and with something of the same effect which belongs to a figure of death introduced by a painter, as mixing in the festal dances of a bridal assembly.

These pageants of 1763–64 occupy a considerable space in Goethe's Memoirs, and with some *logical* propriety at least, in consideration of their being exclusively attached to Frankfort, and connected by

manifold links of person and office with the privileged character of the city. Perhaps he might feel a sort of narrow local patriotism in recalling these scenes to public notice by description, at a time when they had been irretrievably extinguished as realities. But, after making every allowance for their local value to a Frankfort family, and for their memorable splendor, we may venture to suppose that by far the most impressive remembrances which had gathered about the boyhood of Goethe, were those which pointed to Frederick of Prussia. This singular man, so imbecile as a pretender to philosophy and new lights, so truly heroic under misfortunes, was the first German who created a German interest, and gave a transient unity to the German name, under all its multiplied divisions. Were it only for this conquest of difficulties so peculiar, he would deserve his German designation of Fred. the Unique (*Fritz der einzige*). He had been partially tried and known previously; but it was the Seven Years' War which made him the popular idol. This began in 1756; and to Frankfort, in a very peculiar way, that war brought dissensions and heart-burnings in its train. The imperial connections of the city with many public and private interests, pledged it to the anti-Prussian cause. It happened also that the truly German character of the reigning imperial family, the domestic habits of the empress and her young daughters, and other circumstances, were of a nature to endear the ties of policy; self-interest and affection pointed in the same direction. And yet were all these considerations allowed to melt away before the brilliant qualities of one man, and the romantic enthusiasm kindled by his victories. Frank-

fort was divided within herself; the young and the generous were all dedicated to Frederick. A smaller party, more cautious and prudent, were, for the imperialists. Families were divided upon this question against families, and often against themselves; feuds, begun in private, issued often into public violence; and, according to Goethe's own illustration, the streets were vexed by daily brawls as hot and as personal as of old between the Capulets and Montagues.

These dissensions, however, were pursued with not much personal risk to any of the Goethes, until a French army passed the Rhine as allies of the imperialists. One corps of this force took up their quarters in Frankfort; and the Comte Thorane, who held a high appointment on the staff, settled himself for a long period of time in the spacious mansion of Goethe's father. This officer, whom his place made responsible for the discipline of the army in relation to the citizens, was naturally by temper disposed to moderation and forbearance. He was indeed a favorable specimen of French military officers under the old system; well bred, not arrogant, well informed, and a friend of the fine arts. For painting, in particular, he professed great regard and some knowledge. The Goethes were able to forward his views amongst German artists; whilst, on the other hand, they were pleased to have thus an opportunity of directing his patronage towards some of their own needy connections. In this exchange of good offices, the two parties were for some time able to maintain a fair appearance of reciprocal good-will. This on the comte's side, if not particularly warm, was probably sincere; but in Goethe the father it was a masque for inveterate dislike. A

natural ground of this existed in the original relations between them. Under whatever disguise or pretext, the Frenchman was in fact a military intruder. He occupied the best suite of rooms in the house, used the furniture as his own; and, though upon private motives he abstained from doing all the injury which his situation authorized, (so as in particular to have spread his fine military maps upon the floor, rather than disfigure the decorated walls by nails,) still he claimed credit, if not services of requital, for all such instances of forbearance. Here were grievances enough; but, in addition to those, the comte's official appointments drew upon him a weight of daily business which kept the house in a continual uproar. Farewell to the quiet of a literary amateur, and the orderliness of a German household. Finally, the comte was a Frenchman. These were too many assaults upon one man's patience. It will be readily understood, therefore, how it happened, that, whilst Goethe's gentle minded mother, with her flock of children, continued to be on the best terms with Comte Thorane, the master of the house kept moodily aloof, and retreated from all intercourse.

Goethe, in his own Memoir, enters into large details upon this subject; and from him we shall borrow the *denouement* of the tale. A crisis had for some time been lowering over the French affairs in Frankfort; things seemed ripening for a battle; and at last it came. Flight, siege, bombardment, possibly a storm, all danced before the eyes of the terrified citizens. Fortunately, however, the battle took place at the distance of four or five miles from Frankfort. Monsieur le Comte was absent, of course, on the field of battle.

His unwilling host thought that on such an occasion he also might go out in quality of spectator; and with this purpose he connected another, worthy of a Parson Adams. It is his son who tells the story, whose filial duty was not proof against his sense of the ludicrous. The old gentleman's hatred of the French had by this time brought him over to his son's admiration of the Prussian hero. Not doubting for an instant that victory would follow that standard, he resolved on this day to offer in person his congratulations to the Prussian army, whom he already viewed as his liberator from a domestic nuisance. So purposing, he made his way cautiously to the suburbs; from the suburbs, still listening at each advance, he went forward to the country; totally forgetting, as his son insists, that, however completely beaten, the French army must still occupy some situation or other between himself and his German deliverer. Coming, however, at length to a heath, he found some of those marauders usually to be met with in the rear of armies, prowling about, and at intervals amusing themselves with shooting at a mark. For want of a better, it seemed not improbable that a large German head might answer their purpose. Certain signs admonished him of this, and the old gentleman crept back to Frankfort. Not many hours after came back also the comte, by no means creeping, however; on the contrary, crowing with all his might for a victory which he averred himself to have won. There had in fact been an affair, but on no very great scale, and with no distinguishing results. Some prisoners, however, he brought, together with some wounded; and naturally he expected all well disposed persons to make their compliments of congratulations upon this

triumph. Of this duty poor Mrs. Goethe and her children cheerfully acquitted themselves that same night; and Monsieur le Comte was so well pleased with the sound opinions of the little Goethes, that he sent them in return a collection of sweetmeats and fruits. All promised to go well; intentions, after all, are not acts; and there certainly is not, nor ever was, any treason in taking a morning's walk. But, as ill luck would have it, just as Mr. Goethe was passing the comte's door, out came the comte in person, purely by accident, as we are told; but we suspect that the surly old German, either under his morning hopes or his evening disappointments, had talked with more frankness than prudence. 'Good evening to you, Herr Goethe,' said the comte; 'you are come, I see, to pay your tribute of congratulation. Somewhat of the latest, to be sure; but no matter.' 'By no means,' replied the German: 'by no means; *mit nichten*. Heartily I wished, the whole day long, that you and your cursed gang might all go to the devil together.' Here was plain speaking, at least. The Comte Thorane could no longer complain of dissimulation. His first movement was to order an arrest; and the official interpreter of the French army took to himself the whole credit that he did not carry it into effect. Goethe takes the trouble to report a dialogue, of length and dulness absolutely incredible, between this interpreter and the comte. No such dialogue, we may be assured, ever took place. Goethe may, however, be right in supposing that, amongst a foreign soldiery, irritated by the pointed contrasts between the Frankfort treatment of their own wounded, and of their prisoners, who happened to be in the same circumstances, and

under a military council not held to any rigorous responsibility, his father might have found no very favorable consideration of his case. It is well, therefore, that after some struggle the comte's better nature triumphed. He suffered Mrs. Goethe's merits to outweigh her husband's delinquency; countermanded the order for arrest, and, during the remainder of their connection, kept at such a distance from his moody host as was equally desirable for both. Fortunately that remainder was not very long. Comte Thorane was soon displaced; and the whole army was soon afterwards withdrawn from Frankfort.

In his fifteenth year Goethe was entangled in some connection with young people of inferior rank, amongst whom was Margaret, a young girl about two years older than himself, and the object of his first love. The whole affair, as told by Goethe, is somewhat mysterious. What might be the final views of the elder parties it is difficult to say; but Goethe assures us that they used his services only in writing an occasional epithalamium, the pecuniary acknowledgment for which was spent jovially in a general banquet. The magistrates, however, interfered, and endeavored to extort a confession from Goethe. He, as the son of a respectable family, was to be pardoned; the others to be punished. No confession, however, could be extorted; and for his own part he declares that, beyond the offence of forming a clandestine connection, he had nothing to confess. The affair terminated, as regarded himself, in a severe illness. Of the others we hear no more.

The next event of importance in Goethe's life was his removal to college. His own wishes pointed to

Göttingen, but his father preferred Leipsic. Thither accordingly he went, but he carried his obedience no farther. Declining the study of jurisprudence, he attached himself to general literature. Subsequently he removed to the university of Strasburg; but in neither place could it be said that he pursued any regular course of study. His health suffered at times during this period of his life; at first, from an affection of the chest, caused by an accident on his first journey to Leipsic; the carriage had stuck fast in the muddy roads, and Goethe exerted himself too much in assisting to extricate the wheels. A second illness connected with the digestive organs brought him into considerable danger.

After his return to Frankfort, Goethe commenced his career as an author. In 1773, and the following year, he made his maiden essay in *Goetz of Berlichingen*, a drama, (the translation of which, remarkably enough, was destined to be the literary *coup d'essai* of Sir Walter Scott,) and in the far-famed *Werther*. The first of these was pirated; and in consequence the author found some difficulty in paying for the paper of the genuine edition, which part of the expense, by his contract with the publisher, fell upon himself. The general and early popularity of the second work is well known. Yet, except in so far as it might spread his name abroad, it cannot be supposed to have had much influence in attracting that potent patronage which now began to determine the course of his future life. So much we collect from the account which Goethe himself has left us of this affair in its earliest stages.

‘I was sitting alone in my room,’ says he, ‘at my father’s house in Frankfort, when a gentleman entered,

whom at first I took for Frederick Jacobi, but soon discovered by the dubious light to be a stranger. He had a military air; and announcing himself by the name of Von Knebel, gave me to understand in a short explanation, that being in the Prussian service, he had connected himself, during a long residence at Berlin and Potsdam, with the literati of those places; but that at present he held the appointment from the court of Weimar of travelling tutor to the Prince Constantine. This I heard with pleasure; for many of our friends had brought us the most interesting accounts from Weimar, in particular that the Duchess Amelia, mother of the young grand duke and his brother, summoned to her assistance in educating her sons the most distinguished men in Germany; and that the university of Jena coöperated powerfully in all her liberal plans. I was aware also that Wieland was in high favor; and that the German Mercury (a literary journal of eminence) was itself highly creditable to the city of Jena, from which it issued. A beautiful and well-conducted theatre had besides, as I knew, been lately established at Weimar. This, it was true, had been destroyed; but that event, under common circumstances so likely to be fatal as respected the present, had served only to call forth the general expression of confidence in the young prince as a restorer and upholder of all great interests, and true to his purposes under any calamity.' Thinking thus, and thus prepossessed in favor of Weimar, it was natural that Goethe should be eager to see the prince. Nothing was easier. It happened that he and his brother Constantine were at this moment in Frankfort, and Von Knebel willingly offered to present Goethe. No sooner said than done; they repaired to

the hotel, where they found the illustrious travellers, with Count Goertz, the tutor of the elder.

Upon this occasion an accident, rather than any previous reputation of Goethe, was probably the determining occasion which led to his favor with the future sovereign of Weimar. A new book lay upon the table; that none of the strangers had read it, Goethe inferred from observing that the leaves were as yet uncut. It was a work of Moser, (*Patriotische Phantasien*;) and, being political rather than literary in its topics, it presented to Goethe, previously acquainted with its outline, an opportunity for conversing with the prince upon subjects nearest to his heart, and of showing that he was not himself a mere studious recluse. The opportunity was not lost; the prince and his tutor were much interested, and perhaps a little surprised. Such subjects have the further advantage, according to Goethe's own illustration, that, like the Arabian thousand and one nights, as conducted by Sultana Scheherezade, 'never ending, still beginning,' they rarely come to any absolute close, but so interweave one into another, as still to leave behind a large arrear of interest. In order to pursue the conversation, Goethe was invited to meet them soon after at Mentz. He kept the appointment punctually; made himself even more agreeable; and finally received a formal invitation to enter the service of this excellent prince, who was now beginning to collect around him all those persons who have since made Weimar so distinguished a name in connection with the German literature. With some opposition from his father, who held up the rupture between Voltaire and Frederick of Prussia as a precedent applying to all possible connections of princes and literati,

Goethe accepted the invitation; and henceforwards, for upwards of fifty-five years, his fortunes were bound up with the ducal house of Weimar.

The noble part which that house played in the great modern drama of German politics is well known, and would have been better known had its power been greater. But the moral value of its sacrifices and its risk is not the less. Had greater potentates shown equal firmness, Germany would not have been laid at the feet of Napoleon. In 1806, the Grand Duke was aware of the peril which awaited the allies of Prussia; but neither his heart nor his conscience would allow of his deserting a friend in whose army he held a principal command. The decisive battle took place in his own territory, and not far from his own palace and city of Weimar. Personally he was with the Prussian army; but his excellent consort stayed in the palace to encourage her subjects, and as far as possible to conciliate the enemy by her presence. The fortune of that great day, the 14th of October, 1806, was decided early; and the awful event was announced by a hot retreat and a murderous pursuit through the streets of the town. In the evening Napoleon arrived in person; and now came the trying moment. 'The duchess,' says an Englishman well acquainted with Weimar and its court, 'placed herself on the top of the staircase to greet him with the formality of a courtly reception. Napoleon started when he beheld her: *Qui êtes vous?* he exclaimed with characteristic abruptness. *Je suis la Duchesse de Weimar.* *Je vous plains,* he retorted fiercely, *J'écraserai votre mari;* he then added, 'I shall dine in my apartment,' and rushed by her. The night was spent on the part of the soldiery in all the

horrid excesses of rapine. In the morning the duchess sent to inquire concerning the health of his majesty the emperor, and to solicit an audience. He, who had now benefited by his dreams, or by his reflections, returned a gracious answer, and invited himself to breakfast with her in her apartment.' In the conversation which ensued, Napoleon asked her if her husband were mad; upon which she justified the duke by appealing to his own magnanimity, asking in her turn if his majesty would have approved of his deserting the king of Prussia at the moment when he was attacked by so potent a monarch as himself. The rest of the conversation was in the same spirit, uniting with a sufficient concession to the circumstances of the moment a dignified vindication of a high-minded policy. Napoleon was deeply impressed with respect for her, and loudly expressed it. For her sake, indeed, he even affected to pardon her husband, thus making a merit with her of the necessity which he felt, from other motives, for showing forbearance towards a family so nearly allied to that of St. Petersburg. In 1813 the Grand Duke was found at his post in that great gathering of the nations which took place on the stupendous fields of Leipsic, and was complimented by the allied sovereigns as one of the most faithful amongst the faithful to the great cause, yet undecided, of national independence.

With respect to Goethe, as a councillor so near the duke's person, it may be supposed that his presence was never wanting where it promised to be useful. In the earlier campaigns of the duke, Goethe was his companion; but in the final contest with Napoleon he was unequal to the fatigues of such a post. In all the functions of peace, however, he continued to be a useful

servant to the last, though long released from all official duties. Each had indeed most honorably earned the gratitude of the other. Goethe had surrendered the flower of his years and the best energies of his mind to the service of his serene master. On the other hand, that master had to him been at once his Augustus and his Mæcenas; such is his own expression. Under him he had founded a family, raised an estate, obtained titles and decorations from various courts; and in the very vigor of his life he had been allowed to retire, with all the honors of long service, to the sanctuary of his own study, and to the cultivation of his leisure, as the very highest mode in which he could further the public interest.

The life of Goethe was so quiet and so uniform after the year 1775, when he may first be said to have entered into active life, by taking service with the Duke of Weimar, that a biographer will find hardly any event to notice, except two journeys to Italy, and one campaign in 1792, until he draws near the close of his long career. It cannot interest an English reader to see the dates of his successive appointments. It is enough to know that they soon raised him to as high a station as was consistent with literary leisure; and that he had from the beginning enjoyed the unlimited confidence of his sovereign. Nothing remained, in fact, for the subject to desire which the prince had not previously volunteered. In 1825 they were able to look back upon a course of uninterrupted friendship, maintained through good and evil fortunes, unexampled in their agitation and interest for fifty years. The duke commemorated this remarkable event by a jubilee, and by a medal in honor of Goethe. Full of years and honor, this emi-

rent man might now begin to think of his departure. However, his serenity continued unbroken nearly for two years more, when his illustrious patron died. That shock was the first which put his fortitude to trial. In 1830 others followed; the duchess who had won so much admiration from Napoleon died; then followed his own son; and there remained little now to connect his wishes with the earth. The family of his patron he had lived to see flourishing in his descendants to the fourth generation. His own grandchildren were prosperous and happy. His intellectual labors were now accomplished. All that remained to wish for was a gentle dismissal. This he found in the spring of 1832. After a six days' illness, which caused him no apparent suffering, on the morning of the 22d of March he breathed away as if into a gentle sleep, surrounded by his daughter-in-law and her children. Never was a death more in harmony with the life it closed; both had the same character of deep and absolute serenity.

Such is the outline of Goethe's life, traced through its principal events. But as the events, after all, borrow their interest mainly from the consideration allowed to Goethe as an author, and as a model in the German literature, — *that* being the centre about which all secondary feelings of interest in the man must finally revolve, — it thus becomes a duty to throw a glance over his principal works. Dismissing his songs, to which has been ascribed by some critics a very high value for their variety and their lyrical enthusiasm; dismissing also a large volume of short miscellaneous poems; suited to the occasional circumstances in which they arose; we may throw the capital works of Goethe into two classes, philosophic novels and dramas. The

novels, which we call *philosophic* by way of expressing their main characteristic in being written to serve a preconceived purpose, or to embody some peculiar views of life, or some aspects of philosophic truth, are three, viz., the *Werther's Leiden*; secondly, the *Wilhelm Meister*; and, lastly, the *Wahloer-wandschaften*. The first two exist in English translations; and though the *Werther* had the disadvantage of coming to us through a French version, already, perhaps, somewhat colored and distorted to meet the Parisian standards of sentiment, yet, as respects Goethe and his reputation amongst us, this wrong has been redressed, or compensated at least, by the good fortune of his *Wilhelm Meister*, in falling into the hands of a translator whose original genius qualified him for sympathizing even to excess with any real merits in that work. This novel is in its own nature and purpose sufficiently obscure; and the commentaries which have been written upon it by the Humboldts, Schlegels, &c., make the enigma still more enigmatical. We shall not venture abroad upon an ocean of discussion so truly dark, and at the same time so illimitable. Whether it be qualified to excite any deep and *sincere* feeling of one kind or another in the German mind,—in a mind trained under German discipline,—this we will consent to waive as a question not immediately interesting to ourselves. Enough that it has not gained, and will not gain, any attention in this country; and this not only because it is thoroughly deficient in all points of attraction to readers formed upon our English literature, but because in some capital circumstances it is absolutely repulsive. We do not wish to offend the admirers of Goethe; but the simplicity of truth will not

allow us to conceal, that in various points of description or illustration, and sometimes in the very outline of the story, the *Wilhelm Meister* is at open war, not with decorum and good taste merely, but with moral purity and the dignity of human nature. As a novelist, Goethe and his reputation are problems, and likely to continue such, to the countrymen of Mrs. Inchbald, Miss Harriet Lee, Miss Edgeworth, and Sir Walter Scott. To the dramatic works of Goethe we are disposed to pay more homage; but neither in the absolute amount of our homage at all professing to approach his public admirers, nor to distribute the proportions of this homage amongst his several performances according to the graduations of *their* scale. The *Iphigenie* is built upon the old subject of Iphigenia in Tauris, as treated by Euripides and other Grecian dramatists; and, if we are to believe a Schlegel, it is in beauty and effect a mere echo or reverberation from the finest strains of the old Grecian music. That it is somewhat nearer to the Greek model than a play after the fashion of Racine, we grant. Setting aside such faithful transcripts from the antique as the *Samson Agonistes*, we might consent to view Goethe as that one amongst the moderns who had made the closest approximation to the Greek stage. *Proximus*, we might say, with Quintilian, but with him we must add, '*sed longo intervallo*;' and if in the second rank, yet nearer to the third than to the first. Two other dramas, the *Clavigo* and the *Egmont*, fall below the *Iphigenie* by the very character of their pretensions; the first as too openly renouncing the grandeurs of the ideal; the second as confessedly violating the historic truth of character, without temptation to do so, and

without any consequent indemnification. The *Tasso* has been supposed to realize an Italian beauty of genial warmth and of sunny repose; but from the common defect of German criticism — the absence of all sufficient illustrations — it is as difficult to understand the true nature and constituents of the supposed Italian standard set up for the regulation of our judgments, as it is to measure the degree of approach made to that standard in this particular work. *Eugenie* is celebrated for the artificial burnish of the style, but otherwise has been little relished. It has the beauty of marble sculpture, say the critics of Goethe, but also the coldness. We are not often disposed to quarrel with these critics as *below* the truth in their praises; in this instance we are. The *Eugenie* is a fragment, or (as Goethe himself called it in conversation) a *torso*, being only the first drama in a trilogy or series of three dramas, each having a separate plot, whilst all are parts of a more general and comprehensive plan. It may be charged with languor in the movement of the action, and with excess of illustration. Thus, *e. g.* the grief of the prince for the supposed death of his daughter, is the monotonous topic which occupies one entire act. But the situations, though not those of *scenical* distress, are so far from being unexciting, that, on the contrary, they are too powerfully afflicting.

The lustre of all these performances, however, is eclipsed by the unrivalled celebrity amongst German critics of the *Faust*. Upon this it is better to say nothing than too little. How trifling an advance has been made towards clearing the ground for any sane criticism, may be understood from this fact, that as yet no two people have agreed about the meaning of

any separate scene, or about the drift of the whole. Neither is this explained by saying, that until lately the *Faust* was a fragment; for no additional light has dawned upon the main question since the publication of the latter part.

One work there is of Goethe's which falls into neither of the classes here noticed; we mean the *Hermann and Dorothea*, a narrative poem, in hexameter verse. This appears to have given more pleasure to readers not critical, than any other work of its author; and it is remarkable that it traverses humbler ground, as respects both its subject, its characters, and its scenery. From this, and other indications of the same kind, we are disposed to infer that Goethe mistook his destination; that his aspiring nature misled him; and that his success would have been greater had he confined himself to the *real* in domestic life, without raising his eyes to the *ideal*.

We must also mention, that Goethe threw out some novel speculations in physical science, and particularly in physiology, in the doctrine of colors, and in comparative anatomy, which have divided the opinions of critics even more than any of those questions which have arisen upon points more directly connected with his avowed character of poet.

It now remains to say a few words by way of summing up his pretensions as a man, and his intellectual power in the age to which he belonged. His rank and value as a moral being are so plain as to be legible to him who runs. Everybody must feel that his temperament and constitutional tendency was of that happy quality, the animal so nicely balanced with the intellectual, that with any ordinary measure of propriety

he could not be otherwise than a good man, He speaks himself of his own 'virtue,' *sans phrase*; and we tax him with no vanity in doing so. As a young man even at the universities, which at that time were barbarously sensual in Germany, he was (or so much we collect from his own Memoirs) eminently capable of self-restraint. He preserves a tone of gravity, of sincerity, of respect for female dignity, which we never find associated with the levity and recklessness of vice. We feel throughout, the presence of one who, in respecting others, respects himself; and the cheerfulness of the presiding tone persuades us at once that the narrator is in a healthy moral condition, fears no ill, and is conscious of having meditated none. Yet at the same time we cannot disguise from our selves, that the moral temperament of Goethe was one which demanded prosperity. Had he been called to face great afflictions, singular temptations, or a billowy and agitated course of life, our belief is that his nature would have been found unequal to the strife; he would have repeated the mixed and moody character of his father. Sunny prosperity was essential to his nature; his virtues were adapted to that condition. And happily that was his fate. He had no personal misfortunes; his path was joyous in this life; and even the reflex sorrow from the calamities of his friends did not press too heavily on his sympathies; none of these were in excess either as to degree or duration.

In this estimate of Goethe as a moral being, few people will differ with us, unless it were the religious bigot. And to him we must concede thus much, that Goethe was not that religious creature which by nature he was intended to become. This is to be regretted.

Goethe was naturally pious and reverential toward's higher natures; and it was in the mere levity or wantonness of youthful power, partly also through that early false bias growing out of the Lisbon earthquake, that he falsified his original destination. Do we mean, then, that a childish error could permanently master his understanding? Not so; *that* would have been corrected with his growing strength. But having once arisen, it must for a long time have moulded his feelings; *until* corrected, it must have impressed a corresponding false bias upon his practical way of viewing things; and that sort of false bias, once established, might long survive a mere error of the understanding. One thing is undeniable, — Goethe had so far corrupted and clouded his natural mind, that he did not look up to God, or the system of things beyond the grave, with the interest of reverence and awe, but with the interest of curiosity.

Goethe, however, in a moral estimate, will be viewed pretty uniformly. But Goethe intellectually, Goethe as a power acting upon the age in which he lived, that is another question. Let us put a case; suppose that Goethe's death had occurred fifty years ago, that is, in the year 1785, what would have been the general impression? Would Europe have felt a shock? Would Europe have been sensible even of the event? Not at all; it would have been obscurely noticed in the newspapers of Germany, as the death of a novelist who had produced some effect about ten years before. In 1832, it was announced by the post-horns of all Europe as the death of him who had written the *Wilhelm Meister*, the *Iphigenie*, and the *Faust*, and who had been enthroned by some of his admirers on the same seat

with Homer and Shakspeare, as composing what they termed the *trinity of men of genius*. And yet it is a fact, that, in the opinion of some amongst the acknowledged leaders of our own literature for the last twenty-five years, the *Werther* was superior to all which followed it, and for mere power was the paramount work of Goethe. For ourselves, we must acknowledge our assent upon the whole to this verdict; and at the same time we will avow our belief that the reputation of Goethe must decline for the next generation or two, until it reaches its just level. Three causes, we are persuaded, have concurred to push it so far beyond the proportion of real and genuine interest attached to his works, for in Germany his works are little read, and in this country not at all. *First*, his extraordinary age; for the last twenty years Goethe had been the patriarch of the German literature. *Secondly*, the splendor of his official rank at the court of Weimar; he was the minister and private friend of the patriot sovereign amongst the princes of Germany. *Thirdly*, the quantity of enigmatical and unintelligible writing which he has designedly thrown into his latter works, by way of keeping up a system of discussion and strife upon his own meaning amongst the critics of his country. These disputes, had his meaning been of any value in his own eyes, he would naturally have settled by a few authoritative words from himself; but it was his policy to keep alive the feud in a case where it was of importance that his name should continue to agitate the world, but of none at all that he should be rightly interpreted.

GOETHE

AS REFLECTED IN HIS NOVEL OF "WILHELM MEISTER."

To be an idoloclast is not a pleasant office, because an invidious one. Whenever that can be affected, therefore, it is prudent to devolve the odium of such an office upon the idol himself. Let the object of the false worship always, if possible, be made his own idoloclast. As respects "Wilhelm Meister," this is possible: and so far, therefore, as Goethe's pretensions are founded on that novel, Goethe shall be his own idoloclast. For our own parts we shall do no more than suggest a few principles of judgment, and recall the hasty reader to his own more honorable thoughts, for the purpose of giving an occasional impulse and direction to his feelings on the passages we may happen to quote — which passages, the very passages of Goethe, will be their own sufficient review, and Mr. Goethe's best exposure. We need not waste time in deprecating unreasonable prepossessions: for, except amongst his clannish coterie of partisans in London (collectively not enough to fill the boudoir of a blue-stocking), there *are* no such prepossessions. Some, indeed, of that coterie have on occasion of our former article pushed their partisanship to the extent of forgetting the language of gentlemen. This at least has

been reported to us. We are sorry for *them*; not angry on our account, nor much surprised. They are to a certain degree excusably irritable from the consciousness of being unsupported and unsteadied by general sympathy. Sectarians are allowably ferocious. However, we shall reply only by recalling a little anecdote of John Henderson,⁷⁷ in the spirit of which we mean to act. Upon one occasion, when he was disputing at a dinner party, his opponent being pressed by some argument too strong for his logic or his temper, replied by throwing a glass of wine in his face; upon which Henderson, with the dignity of a scholar who felt too justly how much this boyish petulance had disgraced his antagonist to be in any danger of imitating it, coolly wiped his face, and said, "This, sir, is a digression; now, if you please, for the argument."⁷⁸

And now, if you please, for our argument. What shall that be? How shall we conduct it? As far as is possible, the translator of "Wilhelm Meister" would deny us the benefit of *any* argument; for thus plaintively he seeks to forestall us (Preface, xii.), "Every man's judgment is, *in this free country*, a lamp to himself" (*Free country!* why, we hope there is no despotism so absolute, no not in Turkey, nor Algiers, where a man may not publish his opinion of "Wilhelm Meister!"): "and many, it is to be feared, will insist on judging *Meister* by the common rule; and, what is worse, condemning it, let Schlegel bawl as loudly as he pleases." This puts us in mind of a diverting story in the memoirs of an old Cavalier, published by Sir Walter Scott. At the close of the Parliamentary War he was undergoing some examination (about passports, a

we recollect) by the Mayor of Hull; upon which occasion the mayor, who was a fierce fanatic, said to him some such words as these: "Now, captain, you know that God has judged between you and us; and has given us the victory, praise be unto his name! and yet you see how kindly the Parliament treats you. But, if the victory had gone the other way, and you of the malignant party had stood in our shoes, I suppose now, captain, you would have evil-entreated us; would have put all manner of affronts upon us; kicked us peradventure, pulled our noses, called us sons of w—s." "You're in the right on't, sir," was the reply of the bluff captain, to the great indignation of the mayor, and infinite fun of the good-natured aldermen. So also, when the translator tells us that it is to be feared that many will condemn "Wilhelm Meister" in spite of Schlegel's vociferation, we reply, "You're in the right on't, sir:" they will do so; and Schlegel is not the man, neither William nor Frederick, to frighten them from doing so. We have extracted this passage, however, for the sake of pointing the reader's eye to one word in it: "many will judge it by the common *rule*." What rule is *that*? The translator well knows that there *is* no rule; no rule which can stand in the way of fair and impartial criticism; and that he is conjuring up a bugbear which has no existence. In the single cases of epic and dramatic poetry (but in these only as regards the mechanism of the fable) certain rules have undoubtedly obtained an authority which may prejudice the cause of a writer; not so much, however, by corrupting sound criticism, as by occupying its place. But with regard to a novel, there is no

rule which has obtained any "*prescription*" (to speak the language of civil law) but the golden rule of good sense and just feeling; and the translator well knows that in such a case, if a man were disposed to shelter his own want of argument under the authority of some "common rule," he can find no such rule to plead. How do men generally criticise a novel? Just as they examine the acts and conduct, moral or prudential, of their neighbors. And how is that? Is it by quoting the Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle? Do they proceed as the French Consul did when the Dey of Tunis informed him that he meant to cut off his head? Upon which

"The Consul quoted Wickefort
And Puffendorf and Grotius;
And proved from Vattel
Exceedingly well,
Such a deed would be quite atrocious."

No: they never trouble Puffendorf and Grotius; but try the case "*proprio Marte*," appealing only to their own judgments and their own feelings. This is wise, they say, and that is foolish; this is indecorous, and that is inconsistent: this argues a bad motive, and that leads to a bad consequence. Or if the novel be German, this is indictedly indecent. In this way they judge of actions, in this way of a novel; and in this way we shall judge of "*Wilhelm Meister*"; and cannot allow that our criticism shall be forestalled by any pretence that we are opposing mechanic rules, which do not and cannot exist, to the natural and spontaneous movements of the unprejudiced judgment.

"Scribendi recte *SAPERE* est principium et fons" —

Good sense is the principle and fountain of all just composition. This is orthodox doctrine all over the world, or ought to be. Next, we presume that in all latitudes and under every meridian a poet stands amenable to criticism for the quality of his sentiments and the passions he attributes to his heroes, heroines, and “pattern people.” That the general current of feeling should be deeper than that of ordinary life, nobler, and purer, — is surely no unreasonable postulate: else wherefore is he a poet? Now within a short compass there is no better test by which we can try the style and tone of a poet’s feelings than his ideal of the female character as expressed in his heroines. For this purpose we will have a general turn-out and field-day for Mr. Goethe’s ladies. They shall all parade before the reader. This, while it answers our end, will provide for *his* amusement. Such a display will be sufficient for the style of sentiment; as to the good sense, *that* will be adequately put on record by every part of our analysis.

Now therefore turn out, ye belles of Germany! turn out before London on this fine 26th of August, 1824. *Place aux dames!* Let us have a grand procession to the temple of Paphos with its hundred altars; and Mr. Goethe, nearly fifty years old at the date of “*Wilhelm Meister*,” shall be the high-priest; and we will exhibit him surrounded by all “his young Corinthian laity.”⁷⁶ Here then, reader, is Mr. Goethe’s

I. GALLERY OF FEMALE PORTRAITS.

Mariana. — No. 1 is Mariana, a young actress. With her the novel opens: and her situation is this.

She is connected in the tenderest style of clandestine attachment with Wilhelm Meister the hero. Matters have gone so far that she — how shall we express it? Oh! the German *phrase* is that — she “carries a pledge of love beneath her bosom.” Well, suppose she does: what’s that to us; us and the reader? Why nothing, we allow, unless she asks us to advance money on the *pledge*. The reader is yet but in the vestibule of the tale: he is naturally willing to be pleased, and indisposed to churlish constructions. Undoubtedly he is sorry: wishes it had been otherwise; but he is human himself; and he recollects the old excuse which will be pleaded on this frail planet of ours for thousands of years after we are all in our graves — that they were both young, and that she was artless and beautiful. And finally he forgives them; and if, at the end of the third volume when they must necessarily be a good deal older, he finds them still as much attached to each other as when their hearts were young, he would feel it presumption in himself to remember the case as a transgression. But what is this? Hardly have we gone a few pages further, before we find that — about one month before this lady had surrendered her person to the hero — she had granted all she could grant to one Mr. Norberg, a merchant and a vile sensualist. True, says the book, but *that* was for money; she had no money, and how could she do without money? Whereas now, on the contrary, in Wilhelm’s case it could not be for money; for why? he had none; *ergo*, it was for love — pure love. Besides, she was vexed that she had ever encouraged Norberg, after she came to be acquainted with Wilhelm. Vexed

but did she resolve to break with Norberg? Once or twice she treated him harshly, it is true; but hear her latest cabinet council on this matter with her old infamous attendant (p. 65, i.) :—

“‘I have no choice,’ continued Mariana; ‘do you decide for me! Cast me away to this side or to that; mark only one thing. I think I carry in my bosom a pledge that ought to unite me with him (*i. e.*, Wilhelm) more closely. Consider and determine: whom shall I forsake? whom shall I follow?’

“After a short silence, Barbara exclaimed: ‘Strange that youth should still be for extremes.’” By extremes Barbara means keeping only one; her way of avoiding extremes is to keep both. But hear the hag: “To my view nothing would be easier than for us to combine both the profit and enjoyment. Do you love the one, let the other pay for it; all we have to mind is being sharp enough to keep the two from meeting.”

Certainly, that would be awkward; and now what is Mariana’s answer? “Do as you please; I can imagine nothing, but I will follow.” Bab schemes, and Poll executes. The council rises with the following suggestion from the hag: “Who knows what circumstances may arise to help us? If Norberg would arrive even now, when Wilhelm is away! who can hinder you from thinking of the one in the arms of the other? I wish you a son and good fortune with him: he will have a rich father.”

Adopting this advice, the lady receives Wilhelm dressed in the clothes furnished by Norberg. She is, however, found out by Wilhelm, who forsakes her; and in the end she dies. Her death is announced in

the high German style to Wilhelm : old Bab places a bottle of champagne and three glasses on the table. Then the scene proceeds thus : " Wilhelm knew not what to say, when the crone in fact *let go* the cork, and and filled the three glasses to the brim. Drink!" cried she, having emptied at a draught her foaming glass. " Drink ere the spirit of it pass! This third glass shall froth away untasted to the memory of my unhappy Mariana. How red were her lips when she last drank your health! Ah! and now forever pale and cold!" At the next Pitt or Fox dinner this suggestion may perhaps be attended to. Mr. Pitt of course will have a bottle of good old port set for him, for he drank no champagne. As Kotzebue hastened from Germany to the Palais Royal of Paris for consolation on the death of his wife, so does Wilhelm on reading his sweetheart's farewell letters abscond in a transport of grief to — a coffeehouse, where he disputes upon the stage and acting in general. We are rather sorry for this young creature after all : she has some ingenious feelings ; and she is decidedly the second best person in the novel. The child, which she leaves behind, is fathered by old Bab (drunk perhaps) upon every man she meets ; and she absolutely extorts money from one or other person on account of three different fathers. If she meets the reader, she'll father it upon *him*. In the hands now of a skilful artist this surviving memorial of the frail Mariana might have been turned to some account : by Mr. Goethe it is used only as a handle for covering his hero with irresistible ridicule. He doubts whether he is the father of the child ; and goes about, asking people in effect, " Do

you think I can be the father? Really now, on your honor, has he a look of me?” That Mariana’s conduct had given him little reason to confide in anything she could say except upon her death-bed, we admit; and, as to old Bab’s assurances, they clearly were open to that objection of the logicians — that they proved nothing by proving a little too much. But can any gravity stand the ridicule of a father’s sitting down to examine his child’s features by his own? and that he, who would not believe the dying and heart-broken mother, is finally relieved from his doubts (p. 120, iii.) by two old buffoons, who simply assure him that the child is his, and thus pretend to an authority transcending that of the mother herself? But pass to

No. 2. *Philina*. — This lady is a sort of amalgam of Doll Tear-sheet and the Wife of Bath; as much of a termagant as the first, and as frank hearted as the second. Mr. Goethe’s account of the matter (p. 172, i.) is, that “her chief enjoyment lay in loving one class of men, and being loved by them.” In all particulars, but the good ones, she resembles poor Mariana: like her she is an actress; like her she has her “pledge;” and like Mariana’s, this pledge is open to doubts of the learned on the question of its paternity; for, like her, she is not content with one lover; *not* however, like her, content with two, for she has nearer to two dozen. She plays off the battery of her charms upon every man she meets with: the carnage is naturally great; so that we had half a mind to draw up a list of the killed and wounded. But we must hurry onwards. What becomes of her the reader never learns. Among her lovers, who in general keep her, is one whom she

keeps: for he is her footman; a "fair haired boy" of family. Him she kicks out of her service in vol. the first, p. 174, ostensibly he will not lay the cloth; but in fact because he has no more money; as appears by p. 228, vol. ii., where she takes him back on his having "cozened from his friends a fresh supply;" and to him she finally awards her "pledge," and we think she does right. For he is a fine young lad — this Frederick and we like him much: he is generous and not suspicious as "our friend" Wilhelm; and he is *par parenthèse* a great fool, who is willing to pass for such, which the graver fools of the novel are not; they being all "philosophers." Thus pleasantly does this believing man report the case to the infidel Wilhelm. "Tis a foolish business that I must be raised at last to the paternal dignity: but she asserts, and the time agrees. At first, that cursed visit, which she paid you after Hamlet, gave me qualms. The pretty flesh-and-blood spirit of that night, if you do not know it, was Philina. This story was in truth a hard dower for me, but if we cannot be contented with such things, we should not be in love. Fatherhood at any rate depends entirely upon conviction; I am convinced, and so I am a father." But time presses: so adieu! most philanthropic Philina; thou lover of all *mankind*?

No. 3. is *Mrs. Melina*. — She also is an actress with a "pledge," and so forth. But she marries the father, Herr Melina, and we are inclined to hope that all will now be well. And certainly as far as page so and so, the reader or ourselves, if summoned by Mrs. Melina on any trial affecting her reputation, would be most happy to say that whatever little circumstances might

have come to our knowledge, which as gentlemen we could not possibly use to the prejudice of a lady, we yet fully believed her to be as irreproachable as that lady who only of all King Arthur's court had the qualification of chastity for wearing the magic girdle; and yet it shrank a little,⁸⁰ until she made a blushing confession that smoothed its wrinkles. This would be our evidence up perhaps to the end of vol. i.; yet afterwards it comes out that she "sighed" for Mr. Meister; and that if she sighed in vain, it was no fault of hers.

The manners of these good people are pretty much on a level with their characters: our impression is that all are drunk together, — men, women and children; — women are seen lying on the sofa "in no very elegant position:" the children knock their heads against the table: one plays the harp, one the triangle, another the tambourine: some sing canons; another "whistles in the manner of a nightingale;" another "gives a symphony *pianissimo* upon the Jew's harp:" and last of all comes an ingenious person who well deserves to be imported by Covent Garden for the improvement of the incantations in *Der Freischütz*; "by way of termination, Serlo (the manager) gave a firework, or what resembled one: for he could imitate the sound of crackers, rockets, and firewheels, with his mouth, in a style of nearly inconceivable correctness. You had only to shut your eyes, and the deception was complete." After the lyrical confusion of these Dutch concerts "it follows of course that men and women fling their glasses into the street, the men fling the punch-bowl at each other's heads, and a storm succeeds

which the watch (Neptune and his Tritons)"⁸¹ are called in to appease. Even from personal uncleanness Mr. Goethe thinks it possible to derive a grace. "The white négligée" of Philina, because it was "not superstitiously clean" is said to have given her "a frank and domestic air." But the highest scene of this nature is the bedroom of Mariana; it passes all belief; "Combs, soap, towels, *with the traces of their use*, were not concealed. Music, portions of plays, and pairs of shoes, washes and Italian flowers, pincushions, hair-skewers, rouge-pots and ribbons, books and straw-hats — all were united by a common element, powder and dust." This is the room into which she introduces her lover: and this is by no means the worst part of the description: the last sentence is too bad for quotation, and appears to have been the joint product of Dean Swift and a German Sentimentalist.

Well, but these people are not people of condition. Come we then to two women of rank; and first for

The Countess, who shall be No. 4 in the Goethian gallery. Wilhelm Meister has come within her husband's castle gates attached to a company of strolling players: and if any slight distinctions are made in his favor, they are tributes to his personal merits, and not at all to any such pretensions as could place him on a level with a woman of quality. In general he is treated as his companions; who seem to be viewed as a *tertium quod* between footmen and dogs. Indeed, the dogs have the advantage; for no doubt the dogs of a German "Graf" have substantial kennels; whereas Wilhelm and his party, on presenting themselves at the inhabited castle of the Count, are dismissed with

mockery and insults to an old dilapidated building which is not weather-proof; and, though invited guests, are inhospitably left without refreshments, fire, or candles, in the midst of storm, rain, and darkness. In some points they are raised to a level with the dogs; for as a man will now and then toss a bone to a favorite pointer, so does a guest of the Count's who patronizes merit "contrive to send over many an odd bottle of champagne to the actors." In others they even think themselves far above the dogs; for "many times, particularly after dinner, the whole company were called out before the noble guests; an honor which the artists regarded as the most flattering in the world:" but others question the inference, observing "that on these very occasions the servants and huntsmen were ordered to bring in a multitude of hounds, and to lead strings of horses about the court of the castle." Such is the rank which Mr. Meister holds in her ladyship's establishment; and note that he has hardly been in her presence more than once; on which occasion he is summoned to read to her, but not allowed to proceed, and finally dismissed with the present of a "waistcoat." Such being the position of a waistcoat-er in regard to the Countess, which we have sketched with a careful selection of circumstances, let the reader now say what he thinks of the following *scena* — and of the "pure soul" (p. 300, i.) of that noble matron who is joint performer in it. Wilhelm has been summoned again to read before the ladies, merely because they "felt the time rather tedious" whilst waiting for company, and is perhaps anticipating a pair of trowsers to match his waistcoat. Being "ordered" by the ladies to read, he

reads : but his weak mind is so overwhelmed by the splendid dress of the Countess that he reads very ill. Bad reading is not a thing to be stood : and accordingly, on different pretexts, the other ladies retire, and he is left alone with the Countess. She has presented him *not* with a pair of trowsers, as we falsely predicted, but with a diamond ring : he has knelt down to thank her, and has seized her left hand. Then the *scena* proceeds thus : " He kissed her hand, and meant to rise ; but as in dreams some strange thing fades and changes into something stranger, so, without knowing how it happened, he found the Countess in his arms ; her lips were resting upon his ; and their warm mutual kisses were yielding them that blessedness, which mortals sip from the topmost sparkling foam on the freshly poured cup of love. Her head lay upon his shoulder ; the disordered ringlets and ruffles were forgotten. She had thrown her arm around him : he clasped her with vivacity ; and pressed her again and again to his breast. Oh that such a moment could but last forever ! And *woe to envious fate* that shortened even this brief moment to our friends ! " Well done, Mr. Goethe ! It well befits that he who thinks it rational to bully fate, should think it laudable and symptomatic of " a pure soul " to act as this German matron acts with this itinerant player. It is true that she tears herself away " with a shriek ; " but the shriek, as we discover long afterwards, proceeds not from any pangs of conscience but from pangs of body ; Wilhelm having pressed too closely against a miniature of her husband which hung at her bosom. There is another *scena* of a still worse description prepared for the Countess⁸² but interrupted

by the sudden return of the Count for which we have no room, and in which the next lady on the roll plays a part for which decorum has no name. This lady is

The Baroness; and she is the friend and companion of the Countess. Whilst the latter was dallying with “our friend,” “the Baroness, in the meantime, had selected Laertes, who, being a spirited and lively young man, pleased her very much; and who, woman-hater as he was, felt unwilling to refuse a passing adventure.” Laertes, he it observed — this condescending gentleman who is for once disposed to relax his general rule of conduct in favor of the Baroness — is also a strolling player, and being such is of course a sharer in the general indignities thrown upon the theatrical company. In the present case his “passing adventure” was unpleasantly disturbed by a satirical remark of the lady’s husband, who was aware of his intentions; for Laertes “happening once to celebrate her praises, and give her the preference to every other of her sex, the Baron with a grin replied; ‘I see how matters stand: our fair friend (meaning by *our fair friend* his own wife) has got a fresh inmate for her stalls. Every stranger thinks he is the first whom this manner has *concerned*: but he is grievously mistaken; for all of us, at one time or another, have been trotted round this course. Man, youth, or boy, be he who he like, each must devote himself to her service for a season; must hang about her; and toil and long to gain her favor.’” (Page 284, i.) “After this discovery, Laertes felt heartily ashamed that vanity should have again misled him to think *well*, even in the smallest degree, of any woman whatsoever.” That the Baroness wished to

intrigue with himself was so far a reason with him for "thinking well" of HER; but that she could ever have thought anybody else worthy of this honor restores him to his amiable abhorrence of her sex; and forth with "he forsook the Baroness entirely." By the way, how Laertes came by his hatred of women, and the abominable history of his "double wounds," the reader must look for in Mr. Goethe: in German novels—such things may be tolerated, as also in English brotels; and it may be sought for in either place; but for us, *nous autres Anglois*, —

"Non licet esse tam disertis
Qui musas colimus severiores."

Forsaken by Laertes, the Baroness looks about for a substitute; and, finding no better, she takes up with one Mr. Jarno. And who is Mr. Jarno? What part does *he* play in this play? He is an old gentleman, who has the honor to be also a major and a philosopher; and he plays the parts of bore, of ninny, and also (but not with equal success) of Socrates. Him then, this Major Socrates, for want of some Alcibiades, the Baroness condescends to "trot," as the Baron phrases it; and trotting him we shall leave her. For what she does in her own person, the reader will not be disposed to apply any very respectful names to her; but one thing there is which she attempts to do for her friend the Countess (as Goethe acknowledges at p. 306, i.), which entitles her to a still worse name; a name not in our vocabulary; but it will be found in that of Mr. Goethe, who applies it (but very superfluously) to old Barbara.

Theresa. — This lady is thus described by Mr. Jarno

‘Fraülein Theresa (*i. e.*, in French English, *Mees Terése*) is a lady such as you will rarely see. She puts many a man to shame : I may say she is a genuine Amazon, while others are but pretty counterfeits, that wander up and down the world in that ambiguous dress.” Yes, an Amazon she is — not destined we hope to propagate the race in England — although, by the way, not *the* Amazon ;⁸³ however, she is far better entitled to the name, for in “ putting men to shame ” she is not exceeded by any lady in the novel. Her first introduction to “ our friend ” is a fair specimen of Amazonian *bienséance*. The reader must understand that Wilhelm has just arrived at her house as an invited guest ; has never seen her before ; and that both the lady and himself are young unmarried persons. “ She entered Wilhelm’s room, inquiring if he wanted anything. ‘ Pardon me,’ said she, ‘ for having lodged you in a chamber which the smell of paint still renders disagreeable ; my little dwelling is but just made ready ; you are handselling this room, which is appointed for my guests. In other points you have many things to pardon. My cook has run away, and a serving-man has bruised his hand. I *might* (might?) be forced to manage all myself ; and if it *were* so (*were* so?), we must just⁸⁴ put up with it. One is plagued with nobody so much as with one’s servants ; not one of them will serve you, scarcely even serve himself.’ She said a good deal more on different matters, in general she seemed to like to speak.” This the reader will find no difficulty in allowing ; for, in answer to the very first words that Wilhelm utters, she proposes to tell him her whole history in a confidential way. Listen to her : thus

speaks the Amazonian Fraülein (p. 39, iii.) "Let us get entirely acquainted as speedily as possible. The history of every person paints his character. I will tell you what my life has been: do you too place a little trust in me; and let us be united even when distance parts us." Such is the sentimental overture; after which the reader will not be surprised to learn that in the evening Wilhelm's chamber door opens, and in steps with a bow a "handsome hunter boy," viz., Fraülein Theresa in boy's clothes "Come along!" says she; "and they went accordingly." (Page 43.) As they walked, "among some general remarks," Theresa asked him the following question — not general, but "*London particular*:" "Are you free?" meaning free to make proposals to any woman he met). "I think I am," said he; "and yet I do not wish it." By which he meant that he thought Mariana was dead, but (kind creature) "did not wish" her to be dead. "Good!" said she; "that indicates a complicated story: you also will have something to relate." Conversing thus, they ascended the height, and placed themselves beside a lofty oak. "Here," said she, "beneath this German tree will I disclose to you the history of a German maiden: listen to me patiently" (p. 44): that is, we suppose, with a German patience. But English patience will not tolerate what follows. We have already seen something of Mr. Goethe; else could it be credited that the most obtuse of old libertines could put into the mouth of a young unmarried woman, designed for a model of propriety and good sense, as fit matter for her very earliest communication with a young man, the secret history of her own mother's⁸⁵ adulterous in-

trigues? Adultery, by way of displaying her virgin modesty: her mother's adultery in testimony of her filial piety! So it is, however: and with a single “alas! that I should have so to say of my mother” (p. 44), given to the regrets and the delicacies of the case, this intrepid Amazon proceeds to tell how her father was “a wealthy noble,” “a tender father, and an upright friend; an excellent *economist*,” who had “but one fault;” and what was *that*? “he was too compliant to a wife whose nature was the opposite of his.” Then she goes on to say how this wife could not endure women — no, not her own daughter even, and therefore surrounded herself with men, who joined her in acting plays on a private stage: how “it was easy to perceive that,” even amongst the men, “she did not look on all alike;” how she, the daughter, “gave sharper heed;” made sundry discoveries; “held her tongue, however,” until the servants, whom she “was used to watch like a falcon” (p. 47, iii.), presuming upon the mother's conduct, began to “despise the father's regulations;” upon which she discovered all to that person; who answered however with a *smile* “Good girl! I know it all; be quiet, bear it patiently;” which doctrine she disapproved: how at length her mother's extravagance “occasioned many a *conference* between her parents;” but “for a long time the evil was not helped, until at last the *passions* of her mother brought the business to a head.” “Her first gallant,” it seems (“first” by the way — in what sense? In order of time, or of favor?) “became unfaithful in a glaring manner;” upon which her conduct took so capricious an air, that some sort of arrangement was made, in virtue of which she con-

sented, for "a considerable sum" of money, to travel for the benefit of her passions to the south of France. And so the tale proceeds: for what end let us ask Mr. Goethe, which could not have been as well answered by any other of ten thousand expedients, as by this monstrous outrage upon filial affection, virgin modesty, or (to put it on the lowest ground) upon mere sexual pride; which alone in any place on this earth except "under a German tree" would surely have been sufficient to restrain a female from such an exposure of female frailty? Indeed, if we come to that, for what end that needed to be answered at all? Notice this, reader; for the fair inference is — that all this volunteer exposure of her mother's depravity, delivered by a young "German maiden" dressed in men's clothes to a strolling player whom she had never seen or heard of before, is introduced as an episode that needs no other justification than its own inherent attractions.

We are disposed to have done with this young lady. Yet there is one circumstance about her, which to our English notions appears so truly comic that before we dismiss her we shall advert to it. Many years ago there was a *crim. con.* case brought into the English courts, in the course of which the love-letters of the noble marquis, heir to a dukedom, were produced, read, and of course published in all the newspapers. The matter, the "subject-matter" (as grave men say), of such epistles can generally be guessed at even by persons not destined to set the Thames on fire. How great then was the astonishment and diversion of the public on finding that the staple article in these tender communications was the price of oats at Oxford! We

were at Oxford during the time; and well remember the astonishment of the Corn-market on finding that any part of their proceedings, that an unexceptionable price current of Oxon grain, could by possibility have found its way into the billets-deux of an enamoured patrician. "Feed oats, 40s. Potato oats, same as per last: tick beans looking up." Undoubtedly, "*Oats is riz*" cannot be denied to be a just and laudable communication to and from certain quarters, especially grooms and hostlers: but it struck the English public as *not* the appropriate basis for a lover's correspondence. From this opinion, however, Mr. Goethe evidently dissents: for the whole sentiment of Theresa's character and situation is built upon the solid base of tare and tret, alligation, rebate, and "such branches of learning." All this she had probably learned from her father, who (as we know) was a great "economist," and in the household of a neighboring lady whom she had "assisted in *struggling* with her steward and domestics" (masters and servants, by the way, appear to be viewed by Goethe as necessary belligerents). Economy at all events is the basis of her amatory correspondence; "our conversation, says she (speaking of her lover), always in the end grew economical" (p. 58), and from household economy her lover drew her on by tender and seductive insinuations to political economy. Sentimental creatures! what a delicate transition from "tallow" and "raw hides" to the "bullion question," "circulating medium," and the "Exchequer Bills' bill." The Malthusian view of population, we suppose, would be rather an unwelcome topic; not however on the score of delicacy, as the reader will see by the follow-

ing account from the economic lady herself of the way in which she contrived to introduce herself in an economic phasis to her economic lover. It surpasses the Oxford price-current. "The greatest service which I did my benefactress, was in bringing into order the extensive forests which belonged to her. In this precious property matters still went on according to the old routine; without regularity, without plan; no end to theft and fraud. Many hills were standing bare; an equal growth was nowhere to be found but in the oldest cuttings. I personally visited the whole of them with an experienced forester. I got the woods correctly measured: I set men to hew, to sow" (not *sew*, reader, don't mistake Theresa), "to sow, to plant. That I might mount more readily on horseback, and also walk on foot with less obstruction, I had a suit of men's clothes made for me: I was in many places, I was feared in all.

"Hearing that our young friends with Lothario were purposing to have another hunt, it came into my head for the first time in my life to make a figure; or, that I may not do myself injustice, to pass in the eyes of this noble gentleman for what I was. I put on my man's clothes, took my gun upon my shoulder, and went forward with our hunters, to await the party on our marches. They came: Lothario did not know me: a nephew of the lady's introduced me to him as a clever forester; joked about my youth, and carried on his jesting in my praise, until at last Lothario recognized me. The nephew seconded my project, as if we had concocted it together" (concocted! what a word!) "He circumstantially and gratefully described

what I had done for the estates of his aunt, and consequently for himself.”

Now at this point, laying all things together, — the male attire, the gun, the forest, and the ominous name of the lover, — we are afraid that the reader is looking to hear of something not quite correct; that in short he is anticipating some

“Speluncam Dido dux et Trojanus eandem deveniunt.”

O fie! reader. How *can* you have such reprehensible thoughts? Nothing of the kind: No, no: we are happy to contradict such scandal, and to assure the public that nothing took place but was perfectly “accurate” and as it should be. The whole went off in a blaze of Political Economy, which we doubt not would have had even Mr. Ricardo’s approbation. The following is Mr. Goethe’s report, which may be looked upon as official.

“Lothario listened with attention; he talked with me; inquired concerning all particulars of the estates and district. I submitted certain projects of improvements to him, which he sanctioned; telling me of similar examples, and strengthening my arguments by the connection which he gave them. My satisfaction grew more perfect every moment. From that day he showed a true respect for me, a fine trust in me: in company he usually spoke to me; asked for my opinion; and appeared to be persuaded that, in household matters, nothing was unknown to me. His sympathy excited me extremely: even when the conversation was of general finance and political economy, he used to lead me to take a part in it.”

We are loath to part with this most amusing Theresa; she is a political economist, and so are we; naturally therefore we love her. We recite one more anecdote about her, and so leave the reader *con la bocca dolce*. The reader has heard of the proud but poor Gascon who was overheard calling to his son at night — "Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?" Some such little household meditation furnishes the sentiment with which Theresa clenches one of her tenderest scenes. She has been confiding her history, her woes, and her despondency, to "our friend;" and had indeed "as the sun went down" (milking time), "*both her fine eyes,*" we need not say, "filled with tears." Such is the scene; and thus it is wound up: "Theresa spoke not; she laid her hand upon her new friend's hands; he kissed it with emotion; she dried her tears and rose. 'Let us return, and see that *all is right,*' said she." — All right! all right behind! *Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*

Aurelia. — This lady is not, like Theresa, a "German maiden," for, indeed, she is not a maiden at all; neither has she a "German tree" to stand under; but, for all that, she is quite as well disposed to tell her German story in a German way. Let her speak for herself: "My friend," says she to "our friend,"⁸⁰ "it is but a few minutes since we saw each other first, and already you are going to become my confidant" (p. 78). Not as though he has offered to be so: nothing of the sort: but she is resolved he shall be so. What determinate kindness! What resolute liberality. For this time, however, her liberality is balked; for it bounces the philanthropic Philina; interrupts Aurelia

and, upon that lady's leaving the room, tells her story for her in the following elegant (though not quite accurate) terms : “ Pretty things are going on here, just of the sort I like. Aurelia has had a hapless love-affair with some nobleman, who seems to be a very stately person, one that I myself could like to see some day. He has left her a memorial, or I much mistake. There is a boy running over the house, of three years old or *thereby* (*i. e.*, thereabouts); the papa must be a very pretty fellow. Commonly I cannot suffer children, but this brat quite delights me. I have calculated Aurelia's business. The death of her husband, the new acquaintance, the child's age, all things agree. But now her spark has gone his ways; for a year she has not seen a glimpse of him. She is beside herself and inconsolable for this. The more fool she!” From Aurelia she passes to Aurelia's brother; and, though it is digressing a little, we must communicate her little memoir of this gentleman's “passions;” for naturally he has his passions as well as other people; every gentleman has a right to his passions; say, a couple of passions, or “thereby,” to use the translator's phrase: but Mr. Serlo, the gentleman in question, is really unreasonable, as the muster-roll will show; the reader will be so good as to keep count. “Her brother,” proceeds the frank-hearted Philina, “has a dancing girl among his troop, with whom he stands on pretty terms” (*one*); “an actress to whom he is betrothed” (*two*); “in the town some other women whom he courts” (women, observe, accusative plural; that must at least make *three, four, five*); “I, too, am on his list” (*six*). “The more fool he! Of the rest thou shalt

hear to-morrow." Verily, this Mr. Serlo has laid in a pretty fair winter's provision for his "passions!" The loving speaker concludes with informing Wilhelm that she, Philina, has for her part fallen in love with himself; begs him, however, to fall in love with Aurelia, because in that case "the chase would be worth beholding. She (that is, Aurelia) pursues her faithless swain, thou her, I thee, her brother me." Certainly an ingenious design for a reel of eight even in merry England; but what would it be then in Germany, where each man might (as we know by Wilhelm, etc.) pursue all the four women at once, and be pursued by as many of the four as thought fit. Our English brains whirl at the thought of the cycles and epicycles, the vortices, the osculating curves, they would describe; what a practical commentary on the doctrine of combinations and permutations! What a lesson to English bell-ringers on the art of ringing changes! what "triple bobs" and "bob majors" would result! What a kaleidoscope to look into! O ye deities, that preside over men's Sides, protect all Christian ones from the siege of inextinguishable laughter which threatens them at this spectacle of eight heavy High German lovers engaged in this amorous "barley-break!"⁸⁷

To recover our gravity, let us return to Aurelia's story which she tells herself to Wilhelm. Not having, like a Theresa, any family adulteries to record in the lineal, she seeks them in the collateral branches; and instead of her mother's intrigues, recites her aunt's, who "resigned herself headlong to every impulse." There is a description of this lady's paramours, retiring from her society, which it is absolutely impossible to quote

Quitting her aunt's intrigues, she comes to one of her own. But we have had too much of such matter; and of this we shall notice only one circumstance of horrible aggravation, viz., the particular situation in which it commenced. This we state in the words of the translation: “My husband grew sick, his strength was visibly decaying; anxiety for him interrupted my general indifference. *It was at this time* that I formed an acquaintance (viz., with Lothario) which opened up a new life for me; a new and *quicker* one, for it will soon be done.” . . . One other part of this lady's conduct merits notice for its exquisite *Germanity*: most strikingly and *cuttingly*, it shows what difference a few score leagues will make in the moral quality of actions—that, which in Germany is but the characteristic act of a high-minded sentimentalist, would in England bring the party within the cutting and maiming act. The case is this. Mr. Meister, at the close of her story volunteers a vow, for no reason that we can see but that he may have the pleasure of breaking it; which he does. “Accept a vow,” says he, as if it had been a peach. “I accept it, said she, and made a movement with her right hand, as if meaning to take hold of his, but instantly she darted it into her pocket, pulled out her dagger as quick as lightning, and scored with the edge and point of it across his hand. He hastily drew back his arm” (Meister, German Meister even, does not like this); “but the blood was already running down. One must mark you men rather sharply, if one means you to take heed, cried she.” . . . “She ran to her drawer; brought lint with other apparatus; stanchd the blood; and viewed the wound attentively.

It went across the palm, close under the thumb, dividing the life-lines, and running towards the little finger. She bound it up in silence with a significant reflective look."

Mignon. — The situation or character, one or both, of this young person, is relied upon by all the admirers of Goethe as the most brilliant achievement of his poetic powers. We, on our part, are no less ready to take our stand on this as the most unequivocal evidence of depraved taste and defective sensibility. The reader might in this instance judge for himself with very little waste of time, if he were to mark the margin of those paragraphs in which the name of Mignon occurs, and to read them detached from all the rest. An odd way, we admit, of examining a work of any art, if it were really composed on just principles of art; and the inference is pretty plain, where such an insulation is possible; which, in the case of Mignon, it is. The translator, indeed, is bound to think *not*; for with a peculiar infelicity of judgment natural enough to a critic who writes in the character of a eulogist, he says of this person, that "her history runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed only to the head." But a glittering metaphor is always suspicious in criticism; in this case it should naturally imply that Mignon in some way or other modifies the action and actors of the piece. Now, it is certain that never was there a character in drama or in novel on which any stress was laid, which so little influenced the movement of the story. Nothing is either hastened or retarded by Mignon; she neither

acts nor is acted upon ; and we challenge the critic to point to any incident or situation of interest which would not remain uninjured though Mignon were wholly removed from the story. So removable a person can hardly be a connecting thread of gold ; unless, indeed, under the notion of a thread which everywhere betrays, by difference of color or substance, its refusal to blend with the surrounding tissue ; a notion which is far from the meaning of the critic. But without dwelling on this objection ; the relation of Mignon to the other characters and the series of the incidents is none at all ; but, waiving this, let us examine her character and her situation each for itself, and not as any part of a novel. The character in this case, if Mignon can be said to have one, arises out of the situation. And what is that ? For the information of the reader, we shall state it as accurately as possible. First of all, Mignon is the offspring of an incestuous connection between a brother and sister. Here let us pause one moment to point the reader's attention to Mr. Goethe, who is now at his old tricks ; never relying on the grand high road sensibilities of human nature, but always travelling into by-paths of unnatural or unhalloved interest. Suicide, adultery, incest, monstrous situations, or manifestations of supernatural power, are the stimulants to which he constantly resorts in order to rouse his own feelings, originally feeble, and, long before the date of this work, grown torpid from artificial excitement. In the case before us, what purpose is answered by the use of an expedient, the very name of which is terrific and appalling to men of all nations, habits, and religions ? What comes of it ?

What use, what result can be pleaded to justify the tampering with such tremendous agencies? The father of Mignon, it may be answered, goes mad. He does; but is a madness, such as his, a justifying occasion for such an adjuration; is this a *dignus vindice nodus*? a madness which is mere senile dotage and fatuity, pure childish imbecility, without passion, without dignity, and characterized by no one feeling but such as is base and selfish, viz., a clinging to life, and an inexplicable *dread of little boys*! A state so mean might surely have arisen from some cause less awful; and we must add that a state so capriciously and fantastically conceived, so little arising out of any determinate cause of passion, or capable of expressing any cause of passion as its natural language, is to be justified only by a downright affidavit to the facts, and is not a proper object for the contemplation of a poet, we submit. Madhouses doubtless furnish many cases of fatuity, no less eccentric and to all appearance arbitrary; as facts, as known realities, they do not on this account cease to be affecting; but as poetic creations, which must include their own law, they become unintelligible and monstrous. Besides, we are conceding too much to Mr. Goethe; the fatuity of the old man is nowhere connected with the unhappy circumstances of his previous life; on the whole it seems to be the product of mere constitutional weakness of brain, or probably is a liver case; for he is put under the care of a mad doctor; and, by the help chiefly of a *course of newspapers*, he begins to recover; and finally he recovers altogether by one of the oddest prescriptions in the world; he puts a glassful of laudanum into a "firm, little, ground-glass phial;"

of this, however, he never drinks, but simply keeps it in his pocket; and the consciousness that he carries suicide in his waistcoat pocket reconciles him to life, and puts the finishing hand to the “recovery of his reason” (p. 274). With such a pocket companion about him, the reader would swear now that this old gentleman, if he must absolutely commit suicide for the good of the novel, will die by laudanum. Why else have we so circumstantial an account of the “ground-glass phial,” drawn up as if by some great auctioneer, — Christie or Squibb, — for some great catalogue (“No. so and so, one firm, little, ground-glass phial”). But no; he who is born to be hanged will never be drowned; and the latter end of the old half-wit is as follows: being discharged as cured (or incurable) he one day enters a nobleman’s house, where by the way he had no sort of introduction; in this house, as it happens, Wilhelm Meister is a visitor, and has some difficulty in recognizing his former friend “an *old* harper with a long beard” in a *young* gentleman who is practising as a dandy in an early stage. Goethe has an irresistible propensity to freeze his own attempts at the pathetic by a blighting air of the ludicrous. Accordingly in the present case he introduces his man of woe as “cleanly and genteelly dressed:” “beard vanished; ⁸⁸ hair dressed with some attention to the mode: and in his countenance the *look of age no longer to be seen.*” This last item certainly is as wondrous as Mr. Coleridge’s *reading fly*; and we suspect that the old Æson, who had thus recovered his juvenility, deceived himself when he fancied that he carried his laudanum as a mere *reversionary* friend who

held a sinecure in his waistcoat pocket ; that in fact he must have drunk of it "pretty considerably." Be that as it may, at his first *début* he behaves decently ; rather dull he is, perhaps, but rational, "cleanly," polite, and (we are happy to state) able to face any little boy, the most determined that ever carried pop-gun. But such heroism could not be expected to last forever ; soon after he finds a MS. which contains an account of his own life ; and upon reading it he prepares for suicide. And let *us* prepare also, as shorthand writers to a genuine GERMAN SUICIDE ! In such a case, now, if the novel were an English novel, supposing, for instance, of our composition, who are English reviewers, or of our reader's composition (who are probably English readers) ; if then we were reduced to the painful necessity of inflicting capital punishment upon one or two of our characters (as surely in our own novel, where all the people are our own creatures, we have the clearest right to put all of them to death) ; matters, we say, being come to that pass that we were called on to make an example of a mutineer or two, and it were fully agreed that the thing must be ; we should cause them to take their laudanum, or their rifle bullet, as the case might be, and die "*sans phrase* ;" die (as our friend "the Dramatist" says) :—

"Die nobly, die like demigods."

Not so our German: he takes the matter more coolly ; and dies more transcendently ; "by cold gradation and well balanced form." First of all, he became convinced that it was now "impossible for him to live ;" that is the idea struck him in the way of a

theory: it was a new idea, a German idea, and he was pleased with it. Next he considered that, as he designed to depart his life “*se offendendo*,” “*Argal*” if the water would not come to him he must look out for the water; so he pulls out the “ground-glass phial,” and pours out his laudanum into a glass of “almond milk.” Almond milk! Was there ever such a German blunder! But to proceed: having mixed his potion, a potion unknown to all the pharmacopœias in Christendom, “he raised it to his mouth; but he shuddered when it reached his lips; he set it down untasted; went out to walk once more across the garden,” &c. (p. 284). O fie, fie! Mr. Mignonette!⁸⁹ this is sad work: “walking across the garden,” and “shuddering,” and “doing nothing,” as Macmorris (“*Henry V.*”) says, “when by Chrish there is work to be done, and throats to be cut.” He returns from the garden, and is balked in his purpose by a scene too ludicrous to mention amongst such tender and affecting matter; and thus for one day he gets a reprieve. Now this is what we call false mercy: well knowing that his man was to die, why should Mr. G. keep him lingering in this absurd way? Such a line of conduct shall have no countenance in any novel that we may write. Once let a man of ours be condemned, and if he won’t drink off his laudanum, then as Bernardine says, (“*Measure for Measure*”) we will “beat out his brains with billets,” but he shall die that same day, without further trouble to ourselves, or our readers. Now, on the contrary, Mr. Mignonette takes three days in dying: within which term we are bold to say that any reasonable man would have been sat upon by the coroner, buried, un-

buried by the resurrection-man, and demonstrated upon by the anatomical Professor. Well, to proceed with this long concern of Mr. Mignonette's suicide, which travels as slowly as a Chancery suit or as the York coach in Charles II.'s reign (note: this coach took fourteen days between York and London, *vide* Eden's "State of the Poor"). To proceed, we say: on the second day, Mr. Mignonette cut his own throat with his own razor: and *that*, you will say, was doing something towards the object we all have in view. It was; at least it might seem so; but there's no trusting to appearances; it's not every man that will die because his throat is cut: a Cambridge man of this day⁹⁰ ("Diary of an Invalid") saw a man at Rome, who, or whose head rather, continued to express various sentiments through his eyes after he (or his head) had been entirely amputated from him (or his body). By the way this man might have some little headache perhaps, but he must have been charmingly free from indigestion. But this is digressing: to return to Mr. Mignonette. In conversing with a friend upon his case, we took a bet that, for all his throat was cut, he would talk again, and talk very well too. Our friend conceived the thing to be impossible; but he knew nothing of German. "It cannot be," said he, "for when the larynx—" "Ay, bless your heart!" we interrupted him, "but in this case the larynx of the party was a German larynx." However, to go on with Mr. Mignonette's suicide. His throat is cut; and still, as Macmorris would be confounded to hear, "by Chrish there is nothing done:" for a doctor mends it again (p. 283), and at p. 284 we win our bet; for he talks as well as ever he did in his

life; only we are concerned to say that his fear of little boys returns. But still he talks down to the very last line of p. 284; in which line, by the way, is the very last word he is known to have uttered; and that is "glass;" not however, that well-known unexceptionable "firm little ground-glass phial," but another which had less right to his dying recollections. Now then, having heard the "last word of dying Mignonette," the reader fondly conceives that certainly Mignonette is dead. *Mit nichten*, as they say in Germany, by no means; Mignonette is *not* dead, nor like to be for one day; nor perhaps would he have been dead at this moment if he had not been a *German* Mignonette; being so, however, the whole benefit of a German throat is defeated. His throat is mended by the surgeon; but having once conceived a German theory that it was impossible for him to live, although he is so composed as to relate his own theory and the incident which caused it, he undoes all the doctor has done, tears away the bandages, and bleeds to death. This event is ascertained on the morning after he had uttered his last word "glass;" the brittle glass of Mignonette's life is at length broken past even a German skill to repair it; and Mignonette is dead,—dead as a door nail, we believe; though we have still some doubts whether he will not again be mended and reappear in some future novel; our reason for which is not merely his extreme tenacity of life, which is like that of a tortoise, but also because we observe that though he is said to be dead, he is not buried; nor does anybody take any further notice of him or ever mention his name; but all about him fall to marrying and giving in marriage; and a few pages wind

up the whole novel in a grand *bravura* of kissing and catch-match-making: we have Mr. Goethe's word for it, however, that Mignonette is dead, and he ought to know. But, be that as it may, nothing is so remarkable as the extreme length of time which it took to do the trick: not until "the third rosyfingèred morn appears" (to speak Homericallly) is the suicide accomplished; three days it took to kill this old young man, this flower, this Mignonette: which we take to be, if not the boldest, the longest suicide on record. And so much for Mr. Mignonette; and so much for a German suicide.⁹¹

HISTORY OF MR. MEISTER'S "AFFAIRS OF THE HEART."

First we find him "in love". (oh! dishonored phrase!) with Mariana; rapturously in love, if the word of Mr. Goethe were a sufficient guarantee. Not so, however. An author may assert what he will of his own creatures; and as long as he does not himself contradict it by the sentiments, wishes, or conduct which he attributes to them, we are to take his word for it; but no longer. We, who cannot condescend to call by the name of "love" the fancies for a pretty face, which vanish before a week's absence or before a face somewhat prettier, still less the appetites of a selfish voluptuary, know what to think of Wilhelm's passion, its depth, and its purity, when we find (p. 211, i.) "the current of his spirits and ideas" stopped by 'the spasm of a sharp jealousy.' Jealousy about whom? Mariana? No, but Philina. And by whom excited? By the "boy" Frederick. His jealousy was no light one; it was "a fierce jealousy" (p. 221

i.) ; it caused him “ a general discomfort, such as he had never felt in his life before ” (p. 211, i.) ; and, had not decency restrained him, he could have “ crushed in pieces all the people round him ” (p. 221, i.) Such a jealousy, with regard to Philina, is incompatible, we presume, with any real fervor of love for Mariana : we are now therefore at liberty to infer that Mariana is dethroned, and that Philina reigneth in her stead. Next he is “ in love ” with the Countess ; and Philina seldom appears to him as an object of any other feelings than those of contempt. Fourthly, at p. 45, ii., he falls desperately in love with “ the Amazon,” *i. e.*, a young lady mounted on a gray courser, and wrapped up in “ a man’s white great-coat.” His love for this *incognita* holds on throughout the work like the standing bass, but not so as to prevent a running accompaniment, in the treble, of various other “ passions.” And these passions not merely succeed each other with rapidity, but are often all upon him at once ; at p. 64, ii., “ the recollection of the amiable Countess is to Wilhelm infinitely sweet ; but anon, the figure of the noble Amazon would step between ; ” and two pages further on he is indulging in day-dreams that “ perhaps Mariana might appear,” or, “ above all, the beauty whom he worshipped ” (*i. e.*, the Amazon). Here, therefore, there is a sort of glee for three voices between the Countess, Mariana, and the Amazon. Fifthly, he is in love with Theresa, the other Amazon. And this love is no joke ; for at p. 134, iii., meditating upon “ her great virtues ” (and we will add, her political economy) he writes a letter offering her his hand ; and at this time (what time ? why, post time to be sure)

"his resolution was so firm, and the business was of such importance" that, lest Major Socrates should intercept his letter, he carries it himself to the office. But, sixthly, see what the resolutions of men are! In the very next chapter, and when time has advanced only by ten pages (but unfortunately after the letter-bags were made up.) Wilhelm finds himself furiously in love with a friend of Theresa's; not that he has seen her since post-time, but he has been reminded of her: this lady is Natalia, and turns out to be "the Amazon." No sooner has he a prospect of seeing her than "all the glories of the sky," he vows, "are as nothing to the moment which he looks for." In the next page (145.) this moment arrives; Wilhelm reaches the house where she lives; on entering, "finds it the most *earnest* and (as he almost felt) the holiest place which he had ever trod;" on going up stairs to the drawing-room is obliged to kneel down "to get a moment's breathing time;" can scarcely raise himself again; and upon actual introduction to the divinity, "falls upon his knee, seizes her hand, and kisses it with unbounded rapture." What's to be done now, Mr. Meister? Pity you had not known this the night before, or had intrusted your letter to Socrates, or had seen some verses we could have sent you from England —

" 'Tis good to be merry and wise,
 'Tis good to be honest and true;
 'Tis good to be off with the old love,
 Before you be on with the new."

Matters begin to look black, especially as Theresa accepts his offer; and (as though Satan himself had a

plot against him) in consequence of that very visit to Natalia which made him pray that she would not. “I hope you will be grateful,” says the new love: “for she (viz., the old love) asked me for advice; and as it happened that you were here just then, I was enabled to destroy the few scruples which my friend still entertained.” Here’s delectable news. A man receives a letter from a lady who has had “her scruples” — accepting him nevertheless, but begging permission “at times to bestow a cordial thought upon her former friend” (Lothario to wit): in return for which she “will press his child (by a former mother) to her heart:” such a letter he receives from one Amazon; “when with terror he discovers in his heart most vivid traces of an inclination” for another Amazon. A man can’t marry two Amazons. Well, thank Heaven! it’s no scrape of ours. A German wit has brought us all into it; and a German *dénouement* shall help us all out. *Le voici!* There are two Amazons, the reader knows. Good: now one of these is *ci-devant* sweetheart to Lothario, the other his sister. What may prevent therefore that Meister shall have the sister, and Lothario (according to Horace’s arrangement with Lydias) his old sweetheart? Nothing but this sweetheart’s impatience, who (p. 184, iii.) “dreads that she shall lose *him*” (Meister) “and not regain Lothario;” *i. e.*, between two chairs, etc., and as Meister will not come to her, though she insists upon it in letter after letter, she comes to Meister; determined to “hold him fast” (p. 184, iii.) O Amazon of little faith! put your trust in Mr. Goethe, and he will deliver you! This he does by a *coup de théâtre*. That lady whose passions had

carried her into the south of France, had bestowed some of her favors upon Lothario: but she is reputed the mother of Theresa; and hence had arisen the separation between Theresa and Lothario. This maternal person however is suddenly discovered NOT to be the mother of Theresa: the road is thus opened to a general winding up of the whole concern; and the novel, as we said before, hastens to its close amid a grand *bravura* of kissing and catch-match-making. In the general row, even old Major Socrates catches a wife; and a young one ⁹² too, though probably enough we fear a Xantippe.

Thus we have made Mr. von Goethe's novel speak for itself. And whatever impression it may leave on the reader's mind, let it be charged upon the composer. If that impression is one of entire disgust, let it not be forgotten that it belongs exclusively to Mr. Goethe. The music is his: we have but arranged the concert and led in the orchestra.

Even thus qualified, however, the task is not to us an agreeable one; our practice is to turn away our eyes from whatsoever we are compelled to loathe or to disdain; and to leave all that dishonors human nature to travel on its natural road to shame and oblivion. If in this instance we depart from that maxim, it is in consideration of the rank which the author has obtained elsewhere, and through his partisans is struggling for in this country. Without the passport of an eminent name, "Wilhelm Meister" is a safe book; but backed in that way the dullest books are floated into popularity (thousands echoing their praise, who are not aware of the matter they contain): and thus even such

books become influential and are brought within the remark of Cicero (“De Legg.,” lib. 3) on the mischief done by profligate men of rank: “Quod non solum vitia concipiunt, sed ea infundunt in civitatem; neque solum obsunt quia ipsi corrumpuntur, sed quia corrumpunt; plusque exemplo quam peccato nocent.”

SCHILLER.

JOHN CHRISTOPHER FREDERICK VON SCHILLER was born at Marbach, a small town in the duchy of Würtemberg, on the 10th day of November, 1759. It will aid the reader in synchronizing the periods of this great man's life with the corresponding events throughout Christendom, if we direct his attention to the fact, that Schiller's birth nearly coincided in point of time with that of Robert Burns, and that it preceded that of Napoleon by about ten years.

The position of Schiller is remarkable. In the land of his birth, by those who undervalue him the most, he is ranked as the second name in German literature; everywhere else he is ranked as the first. For us, who are aliens to Germany, Schiller is the representative of the German intellect in its highest form; and to him, at all events, whether first or second, it is certainly due, that the German intellect has become a known power, and a power of growing magnitude, for the great commonwealth of Christendom. Luther and Kepler, potent intellects as they were, did not make themselves known as Germans. The revolutionary vigor of the one, the starry lustre of the other, blended with the convulsions of reformation, or with the aurora of ascending science, in too kindly and genial a tone to

call off the attention from the work which they performed, from the service which they promoted, to the circumstances of their personal position. Their country, their birth, their abode, even their separate existence, was merged in the mighty cause to which they lent their coöperation. And thus at the beginning of the sixteenth century, thus at the beginning of the seventeenth, did the Titan sons of Germany defeat their own private pretensions by the very grandeur of their merits. Their interest as patriots was lost and confounded in their paramount interest as cosmopolites. What they did for man and for human dignity eclipsed what they had designed for Germany. After them there was a long interlunar period of darkness for the land of the Rhine and the Danube. The German energy, too spasmodically excited, suffered a collapse. Throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, but one vigorous mind arose for permanent effects in literature. This was Optiz, a poet who deserves even yet to be read with attention, but who is no more worthy to be classed as the Dryden, whom his too partial countrymen have styled him, than the Germany of the Thirty Years' War of taking rank by the side of civilized and cultured England during the Cromwellian era, or Klopstock of sitting on the same throne with Milton. Leibnitz was the one sole potentate in the fields of intellect whom the Germany of this century produced; and he, like Luther and Kepler, impresses us rather as a European than as a German mind, partly perhaps from his having pursued his self-development in foreign lands, partly from his large circle of foreign connections, but most or all from his having written chiefly in French or in Latin.

Passing onwards to the eighteenth century, we find, through its earlier half, an absolute wilderness, unreclaimed and without promise of natural vegetation, as the barren arena on which the few insipid writers of Germany paraded. The torpor of academic dulness domineered over the length and breadth of the land. And as these academic bodies were universally found harnessed in the equipage of petty courts, it followed that the lethargies of pedantic dulness were uniformly deepened by the lethargies of aulic and ceremonial dulness; so that, if the reader represents to himself the very abstract of birthday odes, sycophantish dedications, and court sermons, he will have some adequate idea of the sterility and the mechanical formality which at that era spread the sleep of death over German literature. Literature, the very word literature, points the laughter of scorn to what passed under that name during the period of Gottsched. That such a man indeed as this Gottsched, equal at the best to the composition of a Latin grammar or a school arithmetic, should for a moment have presided over the German muses, stands out as in itself a brief and significant memorial, too certain for contradiction, and yet almost too gross for belief, of the apoplectic sleep under which the mind of central Europe at that era lay oppressed. The rust of disuse had corroded the very principles of activity. And, as if the double night of academic dulness, combined with the dulness of court inanities, had not been sufficient for the stifling of all native energies, the feebleness of French models (and of these moreover naturalized through still feebler imitations) had become the law and standard for all attempts at original composition. The darkness of

night, it is usually said, grows deeper as it approaches the dawn; and the very enormity of that prostration under which the German intellect at this time groaned, was the most certain pledge to any observing eye of that intense re-action soon to stir and kindle among the smouldering activities of this spell-bound people. This re-action, however, was not abrupt and theatrical. It moved through slow stages and by equable gradations. It might be said to commence from the middle of the eighteenth century, that is, about nine years before the birth of Schiller; but a progress of forty years had not carried it so towards its meridian altitude, as that the sympathetic shock from the French Revolution was by one fraction more rude and shattering than the public torpor still demanded. There is a memorable correspondency throughout all members of Protestant Christendom in whatsoever relates to literature and intellectual advance. However imperfect the organization which binds them together, it was sufficient even in these elder times to transmit reciprocally from one to every other, so much of that illumination which could be gathered into books, that no Christian state could be much in advance of another, supposing that Popery opposed no barriers to free communication, unless only in those points which depended upon local gifts of nature, upon the genius of a particular people, or upon the excellence of its institutions. These advantages were incommunicable, let the freedom of intercourse have been what it might. England could not send off by posts or by heralds her iron and coals; she could not send the indomitable energy of her population; she could not send the absolute security of property; she could not send the good faith

of her parliaments. These were gifts indigenous to herself, either through the temperament of her people, or through the original endowments of her soil. But her condition of moral sentiment, her high-toned civic elevation, her atmosphere of political feeling and popular boldness, much of these she could and did transmit, by the radiation of the press, to the very extremities of the German empire. Not only were our books translated, but it is notorious to those acquainted with German novels, or other pictures of German society, that as early as the Seven Years' War, (1756-1763,) in fact from the very era when Cave and Dr. Johnson first made the parliamentary debates accessible to the English themselves, most of the German journals repeated, and sent forward as by telegraph, those senatorial displays to every village throughout Germany. From the polar latitudes to the Mediterranean, from the mouths of the Rhine to the Euxine, there was no other exhibition of free deliberative eloquence in any popular assembly. And the *Luise* of Voss alone, a metrical idyl not less valued for its truth of portraiture than our own Vicar of Wakefield, will show, that the most sequestered clergyman of a rural parish did not think his breakfast equipage complete without the latest report from the great senate that sat in London. Hence we need not be astonished that German and English literature were found by the French Revolution in pretty nearly the same condition of semi-vigilance and imperfect animation. That mighty event reached us both, reached us all, we may say, (speaking of Protestant states,) at the same moment, by the same tremendous galvanism. The snake, the intellectual snake, that lay in ambush

among all nations, roused itself, sloughed itself, renewed its youth, in all of them at the same period. A new world opened upon us all; new revolutions of thought arose; new and nobler activities were born; 'and other palms were won.'

But by and through Schiller it was, as its main organ, that this great revolutionary impulse expressed itself. Already, as we have said, not less than forty years before the earthquake by which France exploded and projected the scoria of her huge crater over all Christian lands, a stirring had commenced among the dry bones of intellectual Germany; and symptoms arose that the breath of life would soon disturb, by nobler agitations than by petty personal quarrels, the deathlike repose even of the German universities. Precisely in those bodies, however, it was, in those as connected with tyrannical governments, each academic body being shackled to its own petty centre of local despotism, that the old spells remained unlinked; and to them, equally remarkable as firm trustees of truth, and as obstinate depositories of darkness or of superannuated prejudice, we must ascribe the slowness of the German movement on the path of re-ascent. Meantime the earliest torch-bearer to the murky literature of this great land, this crystallization of political states, was Bodmer. This man had no demoniac genius, such as the service required; but he had some taste, and, what was better, he had some sensibility. He lived among the Alps; and his reading lay among the alpine sublimities of Milton and Shakspeare. Through his very eyes he imbibed a daily scorn of Gottsched and his monstrous compound of German coarseness, with French sensual levity. He could not look at his

native Alps, but he saw in them, and their austere grandeurs or their dread realities, a spiritual reproach to the hollowness and falsehood of that dull imposture, which Gottsched offered by way of substitute for nature. He was taught by the Alps to crave for something nobler and deeper. Bodmer, though far below such a function, rose by favor of circumstances into an apostle or missionary of truth for Germany. He translated passages of English literature. He inoculated with his own sympathies the more fervent mind of the youthful Klopstock, who visited him in Switzerland. And it soon became evident, that Germany was not dead, but sleeping; and once again, legibly for any eye, the pulses of life began to play freely through the vast organization of central Europe.

Klopstock, however, though a fervid, a religious, and, for that reason, an anti-Gallican mind, was himself an abortion. Such, at least, is our own opinion of this poet. He was the child and creature of enthusiasm, but of enthusiasm not allied with a masculine intellect, or any organ for that capacious vision, and meditative range, which his subjects demanded. He was essentially thoughtless, betrays everywhere a most effeminate quality of sensibility, and is the sport of that pseudo-enthusiasm, and baseless rapture, which we see so often allied with the excitement of strong liquors. In taste, or the sense of proportions and congruencies, or the harmonious adaptations, he is perhaps the most defective writer extant.

But if no patriarch of German literature, in the sense of having shaped the moulds in which it was to flow, in the sense of having disciplined its taste, or excited its rivalry, by classical models of excellence, or raised a

finished standard of style, perhaps we must concede that, on a minor scale, Klopstock did something of that service in every one of these departments. His works were at least Miltonic in their choice of subjects, if ludicrously non-Miltonic in their treatment of those subjects. And whether due to him or not, it is undeniable that in his time the mother-tongue of Germany revived from the most absolute degradation on record, to its ancient purity. In the time of Gottsched, the authors of Germany wrote a macaronic jargon, in which French and Latin made up a considerable proportion of every sentence: nay, it happened often that foreign words were inflected with German forms; and the whole result was such as to remind the reader of the medical examination in the *Malade Imaginaire* of Molière:

‘Quid poetea est à faire?
Saignare
Baignare
Ensuita purgare,’ &c.

Now, is it not reasonable to ascribe some share in the restoration of good to Klopstock, both because his own writings exhibit nothing of this most abject euphuism, (a euphuism expressing itself not in fantastic refinements on the staple of the language, but altogether in rejecting it for foreign words and idioms,) and because he wrote expressly on the subject of style and composition?

Wieland, meantime, if not enjoying so intense an acceptance as Klopstock, had a more extensive one; and it is in vain to deny him the praise of a festive, brilliant, and most versatile wit. The Schlegels showed the haughty malignity of their ungenerous natures, in

depreciating Wieland, at a time when old age had laid a freezing hand upon the energy which he would once have put forth in defending himself. He was the Voltaire of Germany, and very much more than the Voltaire; for his romantic and legendary poems are above the level of Voltaire. But, on the other hand, he was a Voltaire in sensual impurity. To work, to carry on a plot, to affect his readers by voluptuous impressions, — these were the unworthy aims of Wieland; and though a good-natured critic would not refuse to make some allowance for a youthful poet's aberrations in this respect, yet the indulgence cannot extend itself to mature years. An old man corrupting his readers, attempting to corrupt them, or relying for his effect upon corruptions already effected, in the purity of their affections, is a hideous object; and that must be a precarious influence indeed which depends for its durability upon the licentiousness of men. Wieland, therefore, except in parts, will not last as a national idol; but such he was nevertheless for a time.

Bürger wrote too little of any expansive compass to give the measure of his powers, or to found national impression; Lichtenberg, though a very gracious observer, never rose into what can be called a *power*, he did not modify his age; yet these were both men of extraordinary talent, and Bürger a man of undoubted genius. On the other hand, Lessing was merely a man of talent, but of talent in the highest degree adapted to popularity. His very defects, and the shallowness of his philosophy, promoted his popularity; and by comparison with the French critics on the dramatic or scenical proprieties he is ever profound. His plummet, if not suited to the soundless depths of

Shakspeare, was able ten times over to fathom the little rivulets of Parisian philosophy. This he did effectually, and thus unconsciously leveled the path for Shakspeare, and for that supreme dominion which he has since held over the German stage, by crushing with his sarcastic shrewdness the pretensions of all who stood in the way. At that time, and even yet, the functions of a literary man were very important in Germany; the popular mind and the popular instinct pointed one way, those of the little courts another. Multitudes of little German states (many of which were absorbed since 1816 by the process of *mediatizing*) made it their ambition to play at keeping mimic armies in their pay, and to ape the greater military sovereigns, by encouraging French literature only, and the French language at their courts. It was this latter propensity which had generated the anomalous macaronic dialect, of which we have already spoken as a characteristic circumstance in the social features of literary Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century. Nowhere else, within the records of human follies do we find a corresponding case, in which the government and the patrician orders in the state, taking for granted, and absolutely postulating the utter worthlessness for intellectual aims of those in and by whom they maintained their own grandeur and independence, undisguisedly and even professedly sought to ally themselves with a foreign literature, foreign literati, and a foreign language. In this unexampled display of scorn for native resources, and the consequent collision between the two principles of action, all depended upon the people themselves. For a time the wicked and most profligate contempt of the local governments for that

native merit which it was their duty to evoke and to cherish, naturally enough produced its own justification. Like Jews or slaves, whom all the world have agreed to hold contemptible, the German literati found it hard to make head against so obstinate a prejudice; and too often they became all that they were presumed to be. *Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.* And the converse too often holds good — that when all who should have smiled scowl upon a man, he turns out the abject thing they have predicted. Where Frenchified Fredericks sit upon German thrones, it should not surprise us to see a crop of Gottscheds arise as the best fruitage of the land. But when there is any latent nobility in the popular mind, such scorn, by its very extremity, will call forth its own counteraction. It was perhaps good for Germany that a prince so eminent in one aspect as *Fritz der einziger*,* should put on record so emphatically his intense conviction, that no good thing could arise out of Germany. This creed was expressed by the quality of the French minds which he attracted to his court. The very refuse and dregs of the Parisian coteries satisfied his hunger for French garbage: the very offal of their shambles met the demand of his palate; even a Maupertuis, so long as he could produce a French baptismal certificate, was good enough to manufacture into the president of a Berlin academy. Such scorn challenged a re-action: the contest lay between the thrones of Germany and the popular intellect, and the final result was inevitable.

* '*Freddy the unique*;' which is the name by which the Prussians expressed their admiration of the martial and indomitable, though somewhat fantastic, king.'

Once aware that they were insulted, once enlightened to the full consciousness of the scorn which trampled on them as intellectual and predestined Heliois, even the mild-tempered Germans became fierce, and now began to aspire, not merely under the ordinary instincts of personal ambition, but with a vindictive feeling, and as conscious agents of retribution. It became a pleasure with the German author, that the very same works which elevated himself, wreaked his nation upon their princes, and poured retorted scorn upon their most ungenerous and unparental sovereigns. Already, in the reign of the martial Frederick, the men who put most weight of authority into his contempt of Germans, — Euler, the matchless Euler, Lambert, and Immanuel Kant, — had vindicated the preëminence of German mathematics. Already, in 1755, had the same Immanuel Kant, whilst yet a probationer for the chair of logic in a Prussian university, sketched the outline of that philosophy which has secured the admiration, though not the assent, of all men known and proved to have understood it, of all men able to state its doctrines in terms admissible by its disciples. Already, and even previously, had Haller, who wrote in German, placed himself at the head of the current physiology. And in the fields of science or of philosophy, the victory was already decided for the German intellect in competition with the French.

But the fields of literature were still comparatively barren. Klopstock was at least an anomaly; Lessing did not present himself in the impassioned walks of literature; Herder was viewed too much in the exclusive and professional light of a clergyman; and, with the exception of John Paul Richter, a man of

most original genius, but quite unfitted for general popularity, no commanding mind arose in Germany with powers for levying homage from foreign nations, until the appearance, as a great scenical poet, of Frederick Schiller.

The father of this great poet was Caspar Schiller, an officer in the military service of the Duke of Würtemberg. He had previously served as a surgeon in the Bavarian army; but on his final return to his native country of Würtemberg, and to the service of his native prince, he laid aside his medical character for ever, and obtained a commission as ensign and adjutant. In 1763, the Peace of Paris threw him out of his military employment, with the nominal rank of captain. But, having conciliated the duke's favor, he was still borne on the books of the ducal establishment; and, as a planner of ornamental gardens, or in some other civil capacity, he continued to serve his serene highness for the rest of his life.

The parents of Schiller were both pious, upright persons, with that loyal fidelity to duty, and that humble simplicity of demeanor towards their superiors, which is so often found among the unpretending natives of Germany. It is probable, however, that Schiller owed to his mother exclusively the preternatural endowments of his intellect. She was of humble origin, the daughter of a baker, and not so fortunate as to have received much education. But she was apparently rich in gifts of the heart and the understanding. She read poetry with delight; and through the profound filial love with which she had inspired her son, she found it easy to communicate her own literary tastes. Her husband was not illiterate, and

had in mature life so laudably applied himself to the improvement of his own defective knowledge, that at length he thought himself capable of appearing before the public as an author. His book related simply to the subjects of his professional experience as a horticulturist, and was entitled *Die Baumzucht, im Grossen* (On the management of Forests). Some merit we must suppose it to have had, since the public called for a second edition of it long after his own death, and even after that of his illustrious son. And although he was a plain man, of no pretensions, and possibly even of slow faculties, he has left behind him a prayer, in which there is one petition of sublime and pathetic piety, worthy to be remembered by the side of Agar's wise prayer against almost the equal temptations of poverty and riches. At the birth of his son, he had been reflecting with sorrowful anxiety, not unmingled with self-reproach, on his own many disqualifications for conducting the education of the child. But at length, reading in his own manifold imperfections but so many reiterations of the necessity that he should rely upon God's bounty, converting his very defects into so many arguments of hope and confidence in Heaven, he prayed thus: 'Oh God, that knowest my poverty in good gifts for my son's inheritance, graciously permit that, even as the want of bread became to thy son's hunger-stricken flock in the wilderness the pledge of overflowing abundance, so likewise my darkness may, in its sad extremity, carry with it the measure of thy unfathomable light; and because I, thy worm, cannot give to my son the least of blessings, do thou give the greatest; because in my hands there is not any thing, do thou from thine pour out all things;

and that temple of a new-born spirit, which I cannot adorn even with earthly ornaments of dust and ashes, do thou irradiate with the celestial adornment of thy presence, and finally with that peace that passeth all understanding.'

Reared at the feet of parents so pious and affectionate, Schiller would doubtless pass a happy childhood; and probably to this utter tranquillity of his earlier years, to his seclusion from all that could create pain, or even anxiety, we must ascribe the unusual dearth of anecdotes from this period of his life; a dearth which has tempted some of his biographers into improving and embellishing some puerile stories, which a man of sense will inevitably reject as too trivial for his gravity or too fantastical for his faith. That nation is happy, according to a common adage, which furnishes little business to the historian; for such a vacuity in facts argues a condition of perfect peace and silent prosperity. That childhood is happy, or may generally be presumed such, which has furnished few records of external experience, little that has appeared in doing or in suffering to the eyes of companions; for the child who has been made happy by early thoughtfulness, and by infantine struggles with the great ideas of his origin and his destination, (ideas which settle with a deep, dove-like brooding upon the mind of childhood, more than of mature life, vexed with inroads from the noisy world,) will not manifest the workings of his spirit by much of external activity. The *fallentis semita vitæ*, that path of noiseless life, which eludes and deceives the conscious notice both of its subject and of all around him, opens equally to the man and to the child; and the happiest of all child

hoods will have been that of which the happiness has survived and expressed itself, not in distinct records, but in deep affection, in abiding love, and the hauntings of meditative power.

Such a childhood, in the bosom of maternal tenderness, was probably passed by Schiller; and his first awaking to the world of strife and perplexity happened in his fourteenth year. Up to that period his life had been vagrant, agreeably to the shifting necessities of the ducal service, and his education desultory and domestic. But in the year 1773 he was solemnly entered as a member of a new academical institution, founded by the reigning duke, and recently translated to his little capital of Stutgard. This change took place at the special request of the duke, who, under the mask of patronage, took upon himself the severe control of the whole simple family. The parents were probably both too humble and dutiful in spirit towards one whom they regarded in the double light of sovereign lord and of personal benefactor, ever to murmur at the ducal behests, far less to resist them. The duke was for them an earthly providence; and they resigned themselves, together with their child, to the disposal of him who dispensed their earthly blessings, not less meekly than of Him whose vicegerent they presumed him to be. In such a frame of mind, requests are but another name for commands; and thus it happened that a second change arose upon the first, even more determinately fatal to the young Schiller's happiness. Hitherto he had cherished a day-dream pointing to the pastoral office in some rural district, as that which would harmonize best with his intellectual purposes, with his love of quiet, and by means of its preparatory require-

ments, best also with his own peculiar choice of studies. But this scheme he now felt himself compelled to sacrifice; and the two evils which fell upon him concurrently in his new situation, were, first, the formal military discipline and monotonous routine of duty; secondly, the uncongenial direction of the studies, which were shaped entirely to the attainment of legal knowledge, and the narrow service of the local tribunals. So illiberal and so exclusive a system of education was revolting to the expansive mind of Schiller; and the military bondage under which this system was enforced, shocked the aspiring nobility of his moral nature, not less than the technical narrowness of the studies shocked his understanding. In point of expense, the whole establishment cost nothing at all to those parents who were privileged servants of the duke; in this number were the parents of Schiller, and that single consideration weighed too powerfully upon his filial piety to allow of his openly murmuring at his lot; while on *their* part the parents were equally shy of encouraging a disgust which too obviously tended to defeat the promises of ducal favor. This system of monotonous confinement was therefore carried to its completion, and the murmurs of the young Schiller were either dutifully suppressed, or found vent only in secret letters to a friend. In one point only Schiller was able to improve his condition; jointly with the juristic department, was another for training young aspirants to the medical profession. To this, as promising a more enlarged scheme of study, Schiller by permission transferred himself in 1775. But whatever relief he might find in the nature of his new

studies, he found none at all in the system of personal discipline which prevailed.

Under the oppression of this detested system, and by pure re-action against its wearing persecutions, we learn from Schiller himself, that in his nineteenth year he undertook the earliest of his surviving plays, the Robbers, beyond doubt the most tempestuous, the most volcanic, we might say, of all juvenile creations anywhere recorded. He himself calls it 'a monster,' and a monster it is; but a monster which has never failed to convulse the heart of young readers with the temperament of intellectual enthusiasm and sensibility. True it is, and nobody was more aware of that fact than Schiller himself in after years, the characters of the three Moors, father and sons, are mere impossibilities; and some readers, in whom the judicious acquaintance with human life in its realities has outrun the sensibilities, are so much shocked by these hyper-natural phenomena, that they are incapable of enjoying the terrific sublimities which on that basis of the visionary do really exist. A poet, perhaps Schiller might have alleged, is entitled to assume hypothetically so much in the previous positions or circumstances of his agents as is requisite to the basis from which he starts. It is undeniable that Shakspeare and others have availed themselves of this principle, and with memorable success. Shakspeare, for instance, *postulates* his witches, his Caliban, his Ariel: grant, he virtually says, such modes of spiritual existence or of spiritual relations as a possibility: do not expect me to demonstrate this, and upon that single concession I will rear a superstructure that shall be self-consistent; every-

thing shall be *internally* coherent and reconciled, whatever be its *external* relations as to our human experience. But this species of assumption, on the largest scale, is more within the limits of credibility and plausible verisimilitude when applied to modes of existence, which, after all, are in such total darkness to us, (the limits of the possible being so undefined and shadowy as to what can or cannot exist,) than the very slightest liberties taken with human character, or with those principles of action, motives, and feelings, upon which men would move under given circumstances, or with the modes of action which in common prudence they would be likely to adopt. The truth is, that, as a coherent work of art, the Robbers is indefensible; but, however monstrous it may be pronounced, it possesses a power to agitate and convulse, which will always obliterate its great faults to the young, and to all whose judgment is not too much developed. And the best apology for Schiller is found in his own words, in recording the circumstances and causes under which this anomalous production arose. 'To escape,' says he, 'from the formalities of a discipline which was odious to my heart, I sought a retreat in the world of ideas and shadowy possibilities, while as yet I knew nothing at all of that human world from which I was harshly secluded by iron bars. Of men, the actual men in this world below, I knew absolutely nothing at the time when I composed my Robbers. Four hundred human beings, it is true, were my fellow-prisoners in this abode; but they were mere tautologies and reiterations of the self-same mechanic creature, and like so many plaster-casts

from the same original statue. Thus situated, of necessity I failed. In making the attempt, my chisel brought out a monster, of which [and that was fortunate] the world had no type or resemblance to show.'

Meantime this demoniac drama produced very opposite results to Schiller's reputation. Among the young men of Germany it was received with an enthusiasm absolutely unparalleled, though it is perfectly untrue that it excited some persons of rank and splendid expectations (as a current fable asserted) to imitate Charles Moor in becoming robbers. On the other hand, the play was of too powerful a cast not in any case to have alarmed his serenity the Duke of Würtemberg; for it argued a most revolutionary mind, and the utmost audacity of self-will. But besides this general ground of censure, there arose a special one, in a quarter so remote, that this one fact may serve to evidence the extent as well as intensity of the impression made. The territory of the Grisons had been called by Spiegelberg, one of the robbers, 'The Thief's Athens.' Upon this the magistrates of that country presented a complaint to the duke; and his highness having cited Schiller to his presence, and severely reprimanded him, issued a decree that this dangerous young student should henceforth confine himself to his medical studies.

The persecution which followed exhibits such extraordinary exertions of despotism, even for that land of irresponsible power, that we must presume the duke to have relied more upon the hold which he had upon Schiller through his affection for parents so absolutely dependent on his highness's power, than upon any

laws, good or bad, which he could have pleaded as his warrant. Germany, however, thought otherwise of the new tragedy than the serene critic of Würtemberg: it was performed with vast applause at the neighboring city of Mannheim; and thither, under a most excusable interest in his own play, the young poet clandestinely went. On his return he was placed under arrest. And soon afterwards, being now thoroughly disgusted, and, with some reason, alarmed by the tyranny of the duke, Schiller finally eloped to Mannheim, availing himself of the confusion created in Stutgard by the visit of a foreign prince.

At Mannheim he lived in the house of Dalberg, a man of some rank and of sounding titles, but in Mannheim known chiefly as the literary manager (or what is called director) of the theatre. This connection aided in determining the subsequent direction of Schiller's talents; and his *Fiesco*, his *Intrigue and Love*, his *Don Carlos*, and his *Maria Stuart*, followed within a short period of years. None of these are so far free from the faults of the *Robbers* as to merit a separate notice; for with less power, they are almost equally licentious. Finally, however, he brought out his *Wallenstein*, an immortal drama, and, beyond all competition, the nearest in point of excellence to the dramas of Shakspeare. The position of the characters of Max Piccolomini and the Princess Thekla is the finest instance of what, in a critical sense, is called *relief*, that literature offers. Young, innocent, unfortunate, among a camp of ambitious, guilty, and blood-stained men, they offer a depth and solemnity of impression which is equally required by way of contrast and of final repose.

From Mannheim, where he had a transient love affair with Laura Dalberg, the daughter of his friend the director, Schiller removed to Jena, the celebrated university in the territory of Weimar. The Grand Duke of that German Florence was at this time gathering around him the most eminent of the German intellects; and he was eager to enroll Schiller in the body of his professors. In 1799 Schiller received the chair of civil history; and not long after he married Miss Lengefeld, with whom he had been for some time acquainted. In 1803 he was ennobled; that is, he was raised to the rank of gentleman, and entitled to attach the prefix of *Von* to his name. His income was now sufficient for domestic comfort and respectable independence; while in the society of Goethe, Herder, and other eminent wits, he found even more relaxation for his intellect, than his intellect, so fervent and so self-sustained, could require.

Meantime the health of Schiller was gradually undermined: his lungs had been long subject to attacks of disease; and the warning indications which constantly arose of some deep-seated organic injuries in his pulmonary system ought to have put him on his guard for some years before his death. Of all men, however, it is remarkable that Schiller was the most criminally negligent of his health; remarkable, we say, because for a period of four years Schiller had applied himself seriously to the study of medicine. The strong coffee, and the wine which he drank, may not have been so injurious as his biographers suppose; but his habit of sitting up through the night, and defrauding his wasted frame of all natural and restorative sleep, had something in it of that guilt which belongs to suicide. On

the 9th of May, 1805, his complaint reached its crisis. Early in the morning he became delirious; at noon his delirium abated; and at four in the afternoon he fell into a gentle unagitated sleep, from which he soon awoke. Conscious that he now stood on the very edge of the grave, he calmly and fervently took a last farewell of his friends. At six in the evening he fell again into sleep, from which, however, he again awoke once more to utter the memorable declaration, 'that many things were growing plain and clear to his understanding.' After this the cloud of sleep again settled upon him; a sleep which soon changed into the cloud of death.

This event produced a profound impression throughout Germany. The theatres were closed at Weimar, and the funeral was conducted with public honors. The position in point of time, and the peculiar services of Schiller to the German literature, we have already stated: it remains to add, that in person he was tall, and of a strong bony structure, but not muscular, and strikingly lean. His forehead was lofty, his nose aquiline, and his mouth almost of Grecian beauty. With other good points about his face, and with auburn hair, it may be presumed that his whole appearance was pleasing and impressive, while in latter years the character of sadness and contemplative sensibility deepened the impression of his countenance. We have said enough of his intellectual merit, which places him in our judgment at the head of the Trans-Rhenish literature. But we add in concluding, that Frederick von Schiller was something more than a great author; he was also in an eminent sense a

great man ; and his works are not more worthy of being studied for their singular force and originality, than his moral character from its nobility and aspiring grandeur.

JOHN PAUL FREDERICK RICHTER.

GRASMERE, OCT. 18, 1821.

MY DEAR F.

YOU ask me to direct you generally in your choice of German authors ; secondly, and especially, among those authors to name my favorite. In such an ocean as German literature, your first request is of too wide a compass for a letter ; and I am not sorry that, by leaving it untouched, and reserving it for some future conversation, I shall add one *moment* (in the language of dynamics) to the attractions of friendship, and the local attractions of my residence ; — insufficient, as it seems, of themselves, to draw you so far northwards from London. Come, therefore, dear F., bring thy ugly countenance to the lakes ; and I will engraft such German youth and vigor on thy English trunk, that henceforwards thou shalt bear excellent fruit. I suppose, F., you know that the golden pippin is now almost, if not quite, extinct in England : and why ? Clearly from want of some exotic, but congenial inoculation. So it is with literatures of whatsoever land : unless crossed by some other of different breed, they all tend to superannuation. Thence comes it that the French literature is now in the last stage of phthisis — dotage — palsy, or whatever image will best express

the most abject state of senile — (senile? no! of anile) — imbecility. Its constitution, as you well know, was, in its best days, marrowless and without nerve; its youth without hope, and its manhood without dignity. For it is remarkable, that to the French people only, of all nations that have any literature at all, has it been, or can it be, justly objected — that they have ‘no paramount book;’ none, that is to say, which stands out as a monument adequately representative of the intellectual power of a whole nation; none which has attested its own power by influencing the modes of thinking, acting, educating, through a long track of centuries. They have no book on which the national mind has adequately acted; none, which has re-acted, for any great end, upon the national mind. We English have mighty authors, almost, I might say, almighty authors, in whom (to speak by a scholastic term) the national mind is contained *eminenter*; that is, virtually contained in its principles: and reciprocally, these abstracts of the English mind continue, in spite of many counteracting forces, to mould and modulate the national tone of thought; I do not say *directly*, for you will object that they are not sufficiently studied; but indirectly, inasmuch as the hundreds in every generation, who influence their contemporary millions, have themselves derived an original influence from these books. The planet Jupiter, according to the speculations of a great German philosopher, is just now coming into a habitable condition: its primeval man is, perhaps, now in his Paradise: the history, the poetry, the woes of Jupiter, are now in their cradle. Suppose, then, that this Jovian man were allowed to come down upon our

earth, to take an inquest among us, and to call us — nation by nation — to a solemn audit on the question of our intellectual efforts and triumphs. What could the earth say for herself? For our parts, we should take him into Westminster Abbey: and standing upon the ancestral dust of England, we should present him with two volumes — one containing Hamlet, Lear, and Othello; the other containing Paradise Lost. This, we should say, this is what we have achieved: these are our Pyramids. But what could France present him? and where? Why, her best offering must be presented in a Boudoir: the impudence even of a Frenchman would not dare to connect the sanctities of religious feeling with any book in his language: the wildest vanity could not pretend to show the correlate of Paradise Lost. To speak in a language suitable to a Jovian visitor, that is, in the language of astronomy, *our* books would appear to him as two heavenly bodies of the first magnitude, whose *period*, the cycle and the revolution of whose orbit, were too vast to be calculated: whilst the very best of France could be regarded as no more than satellites, fitted to move about some central body of insignificant size. Now whence comes this poverty of the French literature? Manifestly hence, that it is too intensely steeped in French manners to admit of any influences from without: it has rejected all alliance with exotic literature; and like some royal families, or like a particular valley in this county, from intermarrying too exclusively in their own narrow circle, it is now on its last legs; and will soon go out like a farthing rushlight.

Having this horrid example before our eyes, what

should we English do? Why, evidently we should cultivate an intercourse with that literature of Europe which has most of a juvenile constitution. Now *that* is beyond all doubt the German. I do not so much insist on the present excellence of the German literature (though, poetry apart, the *current* literature of Germany appears to me by much the best in Europe): what weighs most with me is the promise and assurance of future excellence held out by the originality and masculine strength of thought which has moulded the German mind since the time of Kant. Whatever be thought of the existing authors, it is clear that a mighty power has been at work in the German mind since the French Revolution, which happily coincided in point of time⁹³ with the influence of Kant's great work. Change of any kind was good for Germany. One truth was clear — Whatever was, was bad. And the evidence of this appears on the face of the literature. Before 1789, good authors were rare in Germany: since then, they are so numerous, that in any sketch of their literature all individual notice becomes impossible: you must confine yourself to favorite authors, or notice them by classes. And this leads me to your question — Who is *my* favorite author — My answer is, that I have three favorites: and those are Kant, Schiller, and John Paul Richter. But setting Kant aside, as hardly belonging to the *literature*, in the true meaning of that word, — I have, you see, two. In what respect there is any affinity between them, I will notice before I conclude. For the present, I shall observe only, that in the case of Schiller, I love his works chiefly because I venerate the memory of the man: whereas, in the case of Richter, my

veneration and affection for the man is founded wholly on my knowledge of his works. This distinction will point out Richter as the most eligible *author* for your present purpose. In point of originality, indeed, there cannot arise a question between the pretensions of Richter and those of any other German author whatsoever. He is no man's representative but his own; nor do I think he will ever have a successor. Of *his* style of writing, it may be said, with an emphatic and almost exclusive propriety, that except it proceeds in a spirit of perfect freedom, it cannot exist; unless moving from an impulse self-derived, it cannot move at all. What then *is* his style of writing? What are its general characteristics? These I will endeavor to describe with sufficient circumstantiality to meet your present wants: premising only that I call him frequently *John Paul*, without adding his surname, both because all Germany gives him that appellation as an expression of affection for his person, and because he has himself sometimes assumed it in the title-pages of his works.

First. The characteristic distinction of Paul Richter amongst German authors, I will venture to add amongst modern authors generally, is the two-headed power which he possesses over the pathetic and the humorous: or, rather, let me say at once, what I have often felt to be true, and could (I think) at a fitting opportunity prove to be so, this power is *not* two-headed, but a one-headed Janus with two faces:—the pathetic and the humorous are but different phases of the same orb; they assist each other, melt indiscernibly into each other, and often shine each through each like layers of colored crystals placed one behind

another. Take, as an illustration, Mrs. Quickly's account of Falstaff's death: — here there were three things to be accomplished; first, the death of a human being was to be described; of necessity, therefore, to be described pathetically: for death being one of those events which call up the pure generalities of human nature, and remove to the background all individualities, whether of life or character, the mind would not in any case endure to have it treated with levity: so that, if any circumstances of humor are introduced by the poetic painter, they must be such as will blend and fall into harmony with the ruling passion of the scene: and, by the way, combining it with the fact, that humorous circumstances often *have* been introduced into death-bed scenes, both actual and imaginary, — this remark of itself yields a proof that there *is* a humor which is in alliance with pathos. How else could we have borne the jests of Sir Thomas More after his condemnation, which, *as* jests, would have been unseasonable from anybody else: but being felt in him to have a root in his character, they take the dignity of humorous traits; and do, in fact, deepen the pathos. So again, mere naïveté, or archness, when it is felt to flow out of the cheerfulness of resignation, becomes humorous, and at the same time becomes pathetic: as, for instance, Lady Jane Grey's remark on the scaffold — 'I have but a little neck,' &c. But to return: the death of Falstaff, as the death of a man, was, in the first place, to be described with pathos, and if with humor, no otherwise than as the one could be reconciled with the other: but, 2d, it was the death not only of a man, but also of a Falstaff; and we could not but require that the de-

scription should revive the image and features of so memorable a character; if not, why describe it at all? The understanding would as little bear to forget that it was the death-bed of a Falstaff, as the heart and affections to forget that it was the death-bed of a fellow-creature. Lastly, the description is given, not by the poet speaking in his own universal language, but by Mrs. Quickly, — a character as individually portrayed, and as well known to us, as the subject of her description. Let me recapitulate: 1st, it was to be pathetic, as relating to a man: 2d, humorous, as relating to Falstaff: 3d, humorous in another style, as coming from Mrs. Quickly. These were difficulties rather greater than those of levelling hills, filling up valleys, and arranging trees, in picturesque groups: yet Capability Brown was allowed to exclaim, on surveying a conquest of his in this walk of art — ‘Ay! none but your Browns and your G— Almightyes, can do such things as these.’ Much more then might this irreverent speech be indulged to the gratitude of our veneration for Shakspeare, on witnessing such triumphs of his art. The simple words — ‘*and a’ babbled of green fields,*’ I should imagine, must have been read by many a thousand with tears and smiles at the same instant; I mean, connecting them with a previous knowledge of Falstaff and of Mrs. Quickly. Such then being demonstrably the possibility of blending, or fusing, as it were, the elements of pathos and of humor — and composing out of their union a third metal *sui generis*, (as Corinthian brass, you know, is said to have been the product of all other metals, from the confluence of melted statues, &c., at the burning of Corinth,) — I cannot but consider John Paul

Richter as by far the most eminent artist in that way since the time of Shakspeare. What! you will say, greater than Sterne? — I answer *yes*, to my thinking; and I could give some arguments and illustrations in support of this judgment. But I am not anxious to establish my own preference, as founded on anything of better authority than my idiosyncrasy, or more permanent, if you choose to think so, than my own caprice.

Second. Judge as you will on this last point, that is, on the comparative pretensions of Sterne and Richter to the *spolia opima* in the fields of pathos and of humor; yet in one pretension he not only leaves Sterne at an infinite distance in the rear, but really, for my part, I cease to ask who it is that he leaves behind him, for I begin to think with myself, who it is that he approaches. If a man could reach Venus or Mercury, we should not say he has advanced to a great distance from the earth: we should say, he is very near to the sun. So also, if in anything a man approaches Shakspeare, or does but remind us of him, all other honors are swallowed up in that: a relation of inferiority to him is a more enviable distinction than all degrees of superiority to others, the rear of *his* splendors a more eminent post than the supreme station in the van of all others. I have already mentioned one *quality* of excellence, viz. the interpenetration⁹⁴ of the humorous and the pathetic, common to Shakspeare and John Paul: but this, apart from its *quantity* or degree, implies no more of a participation in Shakspearian excellence, than the possession of wit, judgment, good sense, &c. which, in some degree or other, must be common to all authors of any

merit at all. Thus far I have already said, that I would not contest the point of precedence with the admirers of Sterne: but, in the claim I now advance for Richter, which respects a question of *degree*, I cannot allow of any competition at all from that quarter. What then is it that I claim? — Briefly, an activity of understanding, so restless and indefatigable that all attempts to illustrate, or express it adequately by images borrowed from the natural world, from the motions of beasts, birds, insects, &c. from the leaps of tigers or leopards, from the gambolling and tumbling of kittens, the antics of monkeys, or the running of antelopes and ostriches, &c. are baffled, confounded, and made ridiculous by the enormous and overmastering superiority of impression left by the thing illustrated. The rapid, but uniform motions of the heavenly bodies, serve well enough to typify the grand and continuous motions of the Miltonic mind. But the wild, giddy, fantastic, capricious, incalculable, springing, vaulting, tumbling, dancing, waltzing, caprioling, *pirouetting*, skyrocketing of the chamois, the harlequin, the Vestris, the storm-loving raven — the raven? no, the lark, (for often he ascends ‘singing up to heaven’s gates,’ but like the lark he dwells upon the earth,) in short, if the Proteus, the Ariel, the Mercury, the monster — John Paul, can be compared to nothing in heaven or earth, or the waters under the earth, except to the motions of the same faculty as existing in Shakspeare. Perhaps, meteorology may hereafter furnish us with some adequate analogon or adumbration of its multitudinous activity: *hereafter*, observe: for, as to lightning, or anything we know at present, it pants after them ‘in vain,’ in company with

that porsy old gentleman Time,⁹⁵ as painted by Dr. Johnson. To say the truth, John Paul's intellect — his faculty of catching at a glance all the relations of objects, both the grand, the lovely, the ludicrous, and the fantastic, — is painfully and almost morbidly active: there is no respite, no repose, allowed — no, not for a moment, in some of his works, not whilst you can say *Jack Robinson*. And, by the way, a sort of namesake of this Mr. Robinson, viz. Jack-o'-the-lantern, comes as near to a semblance of John Paul as any body I know. Shakspeare himself has given us some account of Jack: and I assure you, that the same account will serve for Jack Paul Richter. One of his books (*Vorschule der Aesthetik*) is absolutely so surcharged with quicksilver, that I expect to see it leap off the table as often as it is laid there; and therefore, to prevent accidents, I usually load it with the works of our good friend — — Esq. and F. R. S. In fact, so exuberant is this perilous gas of wit in John Paul, that, if his works do not explode, — at any rate, I think John Paul himself will blow up one of these days. It must be dangerous to bring a candle too near him: many persons, especially half-pay officers, have lately 'gone off,'⁹⁶ by inconsiderately blowing out their bed-candle. They were loaded with a different sort of spirit, it is true: but I am sure there can be none more inflammable than that of John Paul! To be serious, however, and to return from chasing his Will-o'-the-wisp, there cannot be a more valuable endowment to a writer of inordinate sensibility, than this inordinate agility of the understanding; the active faculty balances the passive; and without such balance, there is great risk of falling into a sickly

tone of maudlin sentimentality, from which Sterne cannot be pronounced wholly free, — and still less a later author of pathetic tales, whose name I omit. By the way, I must observe, that it is this fiery, meteoric, scintillating, coruscating power of John Paul, which is the true foundation of his frequent obscurity. You will find that he is reputed the most difficult of all German authors; and many Germans are so little aware of the true derivation of this difficulty, that it has often been said to me, as an Englishman, ‘What! can *you* read John Paul?’ — meaning to say, can you read such difficult German? Doubtless, in some small proportion, the mere language and style are responsible for his difficulty: and, in a sense somewhat different, applying it to a mastery over the language in which he writes, the expression of Quintilian in respect to the student of Cicero may be transferred to the student of John Paul: — ‘Ille se profecisse sciat, cui Cicero valde placebit:’ he may rest assured that he has made a competent progress in the German language who can read Paul Richter. Indeed he is a sort of *proof* author in this respect; a man, who can ‘*construe*’ him, cannot be stopped by any difficulties purely verbal. But, after all, these verbal obscurities are but the necessary result and product of his style of thinking; the nimbleness of his transitions often makes him elliptical: the vast expansion and discursiveness in his range of notice and observation, carries him into every department and nook of human life, of science, of art, and of literature; whence comes a proportionably extensive vocabulary, and a prodigious compass of idiomatic phraseology: and finally, the fineness, and evanescent brilliancy of his oblique

glances and surface-skimming allusions, often fling but half a meaning on the mind; and one is puzzled to make out its complement. Hence it is, that is to say, from his mode of presenting things, his lyrical style of connection, and the prodigious fund of knowledge on which he draws for his illustrations and his images, that his obscurity arises. And these are causes which must affect his own countrymen no less than foreigners. Further than as these causes must occasionally produce a corresponding difficulty of diction, I know of no reason why an Englishman should be thought specially concerned in his obscurity, or less able to find his way through it than any German. But just the same mistake is commonly made about Lycophron: he is represented as the most difficult of all Greek authors. Meantime, as far as language is concerned, he is one of the easiest: — some peculiar words he has, I acknowledge, but it is not single words that constitute verbal obscurity; it is the construction, synthesis, composition, arrangement and involution of words, which only can obstruct the reader: now in these parts of style Lycophron is remarkably lucid. Where then lies his reputed darkness? Purely in this, — that, by way of coloring the style with the sullen hues of prophetic vision, Cassandra is made to describe all those on whom the fates of Troy hinged, by enigmatic periphrases, oftentimes drawn from the most obscure incidents in their lives: just as if I should describe Cromwell by the expression, ‘*unfortunate tamer of horses,*’ because he once nearly broke his neck in Hyde-Park, when driving four-in-hand; or should describe a noble lord of the last century as ‘*the roaster of men,*’ because, when a

member of the Hell-fire-club, he actually tied a poor man to the spit ; and having spitted him, proceeded to roast him.⁵⁷

Third. You will naturally collect from the account here given of John Paul's activity of understanding and fancy, that over and above his humor, he must have an overflowing opulence of wit. In fact he has. On this earth of ours, (I know nothing about the books in Jupiter, where Kant has proved that the authors will be far abler than any poor Terræ Filius, such as Shakspeare or Milton,) but on this poor earth of ours I am acquainted with no book of such unintermitting and brilliant wit as his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* ; it glitters like the stars on a frosty night ; or like the stars on Count ——'s coat ; or like the ἀνάριθμοι γέλομα, the multitudinous laughing of the ocean under the glancing lights of sun-beams ; or like a *feu de joie* of fire-works : in fact, John Paul's works are the galaxy of the German literary firmament. I defy a man to lay his hand on that sentence which is not vital and ebullient with wit. What is wit ? We are told that it is the perception of resemblances ; whilst the perception of differences, we are requested to believe, is reserved for another faculty. Very profound distinctions no doubt, but very senseless for all that. I shall not here attempt a definition of wit : but I will just mention what I conceive to be one of the distinctions between wit and humor, viz. — that whilst wit is a purely intellectual thing, into every act of the humorous mood there is an influx of the *moral* nature : rays, direct or refracted, from the will and the affections, from the disposition and the temperament, enter into all humor and thence it is, that humor is of a diffusive quality

pervading an entire course of thoughts ; whilst wit — because it has no existence apart from certain logical relations of a thought which are definitely assignable, and can be counted even, is always punctually concentrated within the circle of a few words. On this account, I would not advise you to read those of John Paul's works which are the wittiest : but those which are more distinguished for their humor. You will thus see more of the man. In a future letter I will send you a list of the whole distributed into classes.

Fourthly and finally. Let me tell you what it is that has fixed John Paul in my esteem and affection. Did you ever look into that sickening heap of abortions — the Ireland forgeries ? In one of these (Deed of Trust to John Hemynge) he makes Shakspeare say, as his reason for having assigned to a friend such and such duties usually confided to lawyers — that he had 'founde muche wickednesse amongste those of the lawe.' On this, Mr. Malone, whose indignation was justly roused to Shakspeare's name borrowed to countenance such loathsome and stupid vulgarity, expresses himself⁹⁸ with much feeling : and I confess that, for my part, that passage alone, without the innumerable marks of grossest forgery which stare upon one in every word, would have been quite sufficient to expose the whole as a base and most childish imposture. For, so far was Shakspeare from any capability of leaving behind him a malignant libel on a whole body of learned men, that, among all writers of every age, he stands forward as the one who looked most benignantly, and with the most fraternal eye, upon all the ways of men, however weak or foolish. From every sort of vice and infirmity he drew nutri-

ment from his philosophic mind. It is to the honor of John Paul, that in this, as in other respects, he constantly reminds me of Shakspeare. Everywhere a spirit of kindness prevails: his satire is everywhere playful, delicate, and clad in smiles; never bitter, scornful, or malignant. But this is not all. I could produce many passages from Shakspeare, which show that, if his anger was ever roused, it was against the abuses of the time: not mere political abuses, but those that had a deeper root, and dishonored human nature. Here again the resemblance holds in John Paul; and this is the point in which I said that I would notice a bond of affinity between him and Schiller. Both were intolerant haters of ignoble things, though placable towards the ignoble men. Both yearned, according to their different temperaments, for a happier state of things: I mean for human nature generally, and, in a political sense, for Germany. To his latest years, Schiller, when suffering under bodily decay and anguish, was an earnest contender⁹⁹ for whatever promised to elevate human nature, and bore emphatic witness against the evils of the time. John Paul, who still lives, is of a gentler nature: but his aspirations tend to the same point, though expressed in a milder and more hopeful spirit. With all this, however, they give a rare lesson on the *manner* of conducting such a cause: for you will nowhere find that they take any indecent liberties, of a personal sort, with those princes whose governments they most abhorred. Though safe enough from their vengeance, they never forgot in their indignation, as patriots and as philosophers, the respect due to the rank of others, or to themselves as scholars, and the favorites of their

country. Some other modern authors of Germany *may* be great writers: but Frederick Schiller and John Paul Richter I shall always view with the feelings due to great men.

ANALECTS FROM RICHTER.

THE HAPPY LIFE OF A PARISH PRIEST IN SWEDEN.

SWEDEN apart, the condition of a parish priest is in itself sufficiently happy: in Sweden, then, much more so. There he enjoys summer and winter pure and unalloyed by any tedious interruptions: a Swedish spring, which is always a late one, is no repetition, in a lower key, of the harshness of winter, but anticipates, and is a prelibation of perfect summer, — laden with blossoms, — radiant with the lily and the rose: inso-much, that a Swedish summer night represents implicitly one half of Italy, and a winter night one half of the world beside.

I will begin with winter, and I will suppose it to be Christmas. The priest, whom we shall imagine to be a German, and summoned from the southern climate of Germany upon presentation to the church of a Swedish hamlet lying in a high polar latitude, rises in wheerfulness about seven o'clock in the morning; and till half past nine he burns his lamp. At nine o'clock, the stars are still shining, and the unclouded moon even yet longer. This prolongation of star-light into the forenoon is to him delightful; for he is a German

and has a sense of something marvellous in a starry forenoon. Methinks, I behold the priest and his flock moving towards the church with lanterns: the lights dispersed amongst the crowd connect the congregation into the appearance of some domestic group or larger household, and carry the priest back to his childish years during the winter season and Christmas matins, when every hand bore its candle. Arrived at the pulpit, he declares to his audience the plain truth, word for word, as it stands in the Gospel: in the presence of God, all intellectual pretensions are called upon to be silent; the very reason ceases to be reasonable; nor is anything reasonable in the sight of God but a sincere and upright heart.

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Just as he and his flock are issuing from the church the bright Christmas sun ascends above the horizon, and shoots his beams upon their faces. The old men, who are numerous in Sweden, are all tinged with the colors of youth by the rosy morning-lustre; and the priest, as he looks away from them to mother earth lying in the sleep of winter, and to the church-yard, where the flowers and the men are all in their graves together, might secretly exclaim with the poet:—‘Upon the dead mother, in peace and utter gloom, are reposing the dead children. After a time, uprises the everlasting sun; and the mother starts up at the summons of the heavenly dawn with a resurrection of her ancient bloom:—And her children?—Yes. but they must wait awhile.’

At home he is awaited by a warm study, and a long-levelled rule of sunlight upon the book-clad wall.

The afternoon he spends delightfully ; for, having before him such perfect flower-stand of pleasures, he scarcely knows where he should settle. Supposing it to be Christmas-day, he preaches again : he preaches on a subject which calls up images of the beautiful eastern-land, or of eternity. By this time, twilight and gloom prevailed through the church : only a couple of wax lights upon the altar throw wondrous and mighty shadows through the aisles : the angel that hangs down from the roof above the baptismal font, is awoken into a solemn life by the shadows and the rays, and seems almost in the act of ascension : through the windows, the stars or the moon are beginning to peer : aloft, in the pulpit, which is now hid in gloom, the priest is inflamed and possessed by the sacred burthen of glad tidings which he is announcing : he is lost and insensible to all besides ; and from amidst the darkness which surrounds him, he pours down his thunders, with tears and agitation, reasoning of future worlds, and of the heaven of heavens, and whatsoever else can most powerfully shake the heart and the affections.

Descending from his pulpit in these holy fervors, he now, perhaps, takes a walk : it is about four o'clock ; and he walks beneath a sky lit up by the shifting northern lights, that to his eye appear but an Aurora striking upwards from the eternal morning of the south, or as a forest composed of saintly thickets, like the fiery bushes of Moses, that are round the throne of God.

Thus, if it be the afternoon of Christmas-day : but, if it be any other afternoon, visitors, perhaps, come and bring their well-bred, grown-up daughters ; like

the fashionable world in London, he dines at sunset ; that is to say, like the *un*-fashionable world of London, he dines at two o'clock ; and he drinks coffee by moonlight ; and the parsonage-house becomes an enchanted palace of pleasure gleaming with twilight, starlight, and moonlight. Or, perhaps, he goes over to the schoolmaster, who is teaching his afternoon school : there, by the candlelight, he gathers round his knees all the scholars, as if — being the children of his spiritual children — they must therefore be his own grandchildren ; and with delightful words he wins their attention, and pours knowledge into their docile hearts.

All these pleasures failing, he may pace up and down in his library already, by three o'clock, gloomy with twilight, but fitfully enlivened by a glowing fire, and steadily by the bright moonlight ; and he needs do no more than taste at every turn of his walk a little orange marmalade — to call up images of beautiful Italy, and its gardens, and orange groves, before all his five senses, and as it were, to the very tip of his tongue. Looking at the moon, he will not fail to recollect that the very same silver disk hangs at the very same moment between the branches of the laurels in Italy. It will delight him to consider that the Æolian harp, and the lark, and indeed music of all kinds, and the stars, and children, are just the same in hot climates and in cold. And when the post-boy, that rides in with news from Italy, winds his horn through the hamlet, and with a few simple notes raises up on the frozen window of his study a vision of flowery realms ; and when he plays with treasured leaves of roses and of lilies from some departed sum-

mer, or with plumes of a bird of paradise, the memorial of some distant friend; when further, his heart is moved by the magnificent sounds of Lady-day, Salla-season, Cherry-time, Trinity-Sundays, the rose of June, &c., how can he fail to forget that he is in Sweden by the time that his lamp is brought in; and then, indeed, he will be somewhat disconcerted to recognize his study in what had now shaped itself to his fancy as a room in some foreign land. However, if he would pursue this airy creation, he need but light at his lamp a wax-candle-end, to gain a glimpse through the whole evening into that world of fashion and splendor, from which he purchased the said wax-candle-end. For I should suppose, that at the court of Stockholm, as elsewhere, there must be candle-ends to be bought of the state-footmen.

But now, after the lapse of half a year, all at once there strikes upon his heart something more beautiful than Italy, where the sun sets so much earlier in summer-time than it does at our Swedish hamlet: and what is *that*? It is the longest day, with the rich freight that it carries in its bosom, and leading by the hand the early dawn blushing with rosy light, and melodious with the carolling of larks at one o'clock in the morning. Before two, that is, at sunrise, the elegant party that we mentioned last winter arrive in gay clothing at the parsonage; for they are bound on a little excursion of pleasure in company with the priest. At two o'clock they are in motion; at which time all the flowers are glittering, and the forests are gleaming with the mighty light. The warm sun threatens them with no storm nor thunder showers; for both are rare in Sweden. The priest, in common with the rest of

the company, is attired in the costume of Sweden; he wears his short jacket with a broad scarf, his short cloak above that, his round hat with floating plumes, and shoes tied with bright ribbons: like the rest of the men, he resembles a Spanish knight, or a provençal, or other man of the south; more especially when he and his gay company are seen flying through the lofty foliage luxuriant with blossom, that within so short a period of weeks has shot forth from the garden plots and the naked boughs.

That a longest day like this, bearing such a cornucopia of sunshine, of cloudless ether, of buds and bells, of blossoms and of leisure, should pass away more rapidly than the shortest. — is not difficult to suppose. As early as eight o'clock in the evening the party breaks up; the sun is now burning more gently over the half-closed sleepy flowers: about nine he has mitigated his rays, and is beheld bathing as it were naked in the blue depths of heaven: about ten, at which hour the company reassemble at the parsonage, the priest is deeply moved, for throughout the hamlet, though the tepid sun, now sunk to the horizon, is still shedding a sullen glow upon the cottages and the window-panes, everything reposes in profoundest silence and sleep: the birds even are all slumbering in the golden summits of the woods: and at last, the solitary sun himself sets, like a moon, amidst the universal quiet of nature. To our priest, walking in his romantic dress, it seems as though rosy-colored realms were laid open, in which fairies and spirits range; and he would scarcely feel an emotion of wonder, if, in this hour of golden vision, his brother, who ran away in childhood, should suddenly present himself as one alighting from some blooming heaven of enchantment.

The priest will not allow his company to depart: he detains them in the parsonage garden, — where, says he, every one that chooses may slumber away in beautiful bowers the brief, warm hours until the re-appearance of the sun. This proposal is generally adopted: and the garden is occupied: many a lovely pair are making believe to sleep, but, in fact, are holding each other by the hand. The happy priest walks up and down through the parterres. Coolness comes, and a few stars. His night-violets and gillyflowers open and breathe out their powerful odors. To the north, from the eternal morning of the pole, exhales as it were a golden dawn. The priest thinks of the village of his childhood far away in Germany; he thinks of the life of man, his hopes, and his aspirations: and he is calm and at peace with himself. Then all at once starts up the morning sun in his freshness. Some there are in the garden who would fain confound it with the evening sun, and close their eyes again: but the larks betray all, and awaken every sleeper from bower to bower.

Then again begin pleasure and morning in their pomp of radiance; and almost I could persuade myself to delineate the course of this day also, though it differs from its predecessor hardly by so much as the leaf of a rose-bud.

DREAM UPON THE UNIVERSE.

I HAD been reading an excellent dissertation of Krüger's upon the old vulgar error which regards the space from one earth and sun to another as empty. Our sun together with all its planets fills only the

21,419,460,000,000,000th part of the whole space between itself and the next solar body. Gracious Heavens! thought I, — in what an unfathomable abyss of emptiness were this universe swallowed up and lost, if all were void and utter vacuity except the few shining points of dust which we call a planetary system! To conceive of our earthly ocean as the abode of death and essentially incapable of life, and of its populous islands as being no greater than snail-shells, would be a far less error in proportion to the compass of our planet than that which attributes emptiness to the great mundane spaces: and the error would be far less if the marine animals were to ascribe life and fulness exclusively to the sea, and to regard the atmospheric ocean above them as empty and untenanted. According to Herschel, the most remote of the galaxies which the telescope discovers lie at such a distance from us, that their light, which reaches us at this day, must have set out on its journey two millions of years ago; and thus by optical laws it is possible that whole squadrons of the starry hosts may be now reaching us with their beams which have themselves perished ages ago. Upon this scale of computation for the dimensions of the world, what heights and depths and breadths must there be in this universe — in comparison of which the positive universe would be itself a nihility, were it crossed — pierced — and belted about by so illimitable a wilderness of nothing! But is it possible that any man can for a moment overlook those vast forces which must pervade these imaginary deserts with eternal surges of flux and reflux, to make the very paths to those distant starry coasts voyageable to our eyes? Can you lock up in a

un or in its planets their reciprocal forces of attraction Does not the light stream through the immeasurable spaces between our earth and the nebula which is furthest removed from us? And in this stream of light there is as ample an existence of the positive, and as much a home for the abode of a spiritual world, as there is a dwelling-place for thy own spirit in the substance of the brain. To these and similar reflections succeeded the following dream: —

Methought my body sank down in ruins, and my inner form stepped out appavelled in light: and by my side there stood another form which resembled my own, except that it did not shine like mine, but lightened unceasingly. ‘Two thoughts,’ said the form, ‘are the wings with which I move; the thought of *Here*, and the thought of *There*. And behold! I am yonder;’ — pointing to a distant world. ‘Come, then, and wait on me with thy thoughts and with thy flight, that I may show to thee the universe under a veil.’ And I flew along with the Form. In a moment our earth fell back, behind our consuming flight, into an abyss of distance; a faint gleam only was reflected from the summits of the Cordilleras; and a few moments more reduced the sun to a little star; and soon there remained nothing visible of our system except a comet which was travelling from our sun with angelic speed in the direction of Sirius. Our flight now carried us so rapidly through the flocks of solar bodies — flocks, past counting unless to their heavenly Shepherd, — hat scarcely could they expand themselves before us, into the magnitude of moons, before they sank behind as into pale nebular gleams; and their planetary earths could not reveal themselves for a moment to the tran-

scendent rapidity of our course. At length Sirius and all the brotherhood of our constellations and the galaxy of our heavens stood far below our feet as a little nebula amongst other yet more distant nebulae. Thus we flew on through the starry wildernesses: one heaven after another unfurled its immeasurable banners before us, and then rolled up behind us: galaxy behind galaxy towered up into solemn altitudes before which the spirit shuddered; and they stood in long array through which the Infinite Being might pass in progress. Sometimes the Form that lightened would outfly my weary thoughts; and then it would be seen far off before me like a coruscation amongst the stars — till suddenly I thought again to myself the thought of *There*, and then I was at its side. But, as we were thus swallowed up by one abyss of stars after another, and the heavens above our eyes were not emptier — neither were the heavens below them fuller; and as suns without intermission fell into the solar ocean like water-spouts of a storm which fall into the ocean of waters; — then at length the human heart within me was overburdened and weary, and yearned after some narrow cell or quiet oratory in this metropolitan cathedral of the universe. And I said to the Form at my side — ‘Oh! Spirit! has then this universe no end?’ And the Form answered and said — ‘Lo! it has no beginning.’

Suddenly, however, the heavens above us appeared to be emptied, and not a star was seen to twinkle in the mighty abyss — no gleam of light to break the unity of the infinite darkness. The starry hosts behind us had all contracted into an obscure nebula: and at length *that* also had vanished. And I thought to my-

self,—‘At last the universe has ended:’ and I trembled at the thought of the illimitable dungeon of pure — pure darkness which here began to imprison the creation: I shuddered at the dead sea of nothing, in whose unfathomable zone of blackness the jewel of the glittering universe seemed to be set and buried forever; and through the night in which we moved I saw the Form which still lightened as before, but left all around it unilluminated. Then the Form said to me in my anguish — ‘Oh! creature of little faith! Look up! the most ancient light is coming!’ I looked; and in a moment came a twilight, — in the twinkling of an eye a galaxy, — and then with a choral burst rushed in all the company of stars. For centuries gray with age, for millennia hoary with antiquity, had the starry light been on its road to us; and at length out of heights inaccessible to thought it had reached us. Now then, as through some renovated century, we flew through new cycles of heavens. At length again came a starless interval; and far longer it endured, before the beams of a starry host again had reached us.

As we thus advanced forever through an interchange of nights and solar heavens, and as the interval grew still longer and longer before the last heaven we had quitted contracted to a point, — and as once we issued suddenly from the middle of thickest night into an Aurora Borealis — the herald of an expiring world, and we found throughout this cycle of solar systems that a day of judgment had indeed arrived; the suns had sickened, and the planets were heaving — rocking, yawning in convulsions, the subterraneous waters of the great deeps were breaking up, and lightnings that were ten diameters of a world in length ran along —

from east to west — from Zenith to Nadir ; and here and there, where a sun should have been, we saw instead through the misty vapor a gloomy — ashy — leaden corpse of a solar body, that sucked in flames from the perishing world — but gave out neither light nor heat ; and as I saw, through a vista which had no end, mountain towering above mountain, and piled up with what seemed glittering snow from the conflict of solar and planetary bodies ; — then my spirit bent under the load of the universe, and I said to the Form, ‘ Rest, rest : and lead me no farther : I am too solitary in the creation itself ; and in its deserts yet more so : the full world is great, but the empty world is greater ; and with the universe increase its Zaaahs.’

Then the Form touched me like the flowing of a breath, and spoke more gently than before : ‘ In the presence of God there is no emptiness : above, below, between, and round about the stars, in the darkness and in the light, dwelleth the true and very Universe, the sum and fountain of all that is. But thy spirit can bear only earthly images of the unearthly ; now then I cleanse thy sight with euphrasy ; look forth, and behold the images.’ Immediately my eyes were opened ; and I looked, and I saw as it were an interminable sea of light — sea immeasurable, sea unfathomable, sea without a shore. All spaces between all heavens were filled with happiest light : and there was a thundering of floods : and there were seas above the seas, and seas below the seas : and I saw all the trackless regions that we had voyaged over : and my eye comprehended the farthest and the nearest : and darkness had become light, and the light darkness : for the deserts and wastes of the creation were now filled with

the sea of light, and in this sea the suns floated like ash-gray blossoms, and the planets like black grains of seed. Then my heart comprehended that immortality dwelled in the spaces between the worlds, and death only amongst the worlds. Upon all the suns there walked upright shadows in the form of men: but they were glorified when they quitted these perishable worlds, and when they sank into the sea of light: and the murky planets, I perceived, were but cradles for the infant spirits of the universe of light. In the Zaaarahs of the creation I saw — I heard — I felt — the glittering — the echoing — the breathing of life and creative power. The suns were but as spinning-wheels, the planets no more than weavers' shuttles, in relation to the infinite web which composes the veil of Isis;¹⁰⁰ which veil is hung over the whole creation, and lengthens as any finite being attempts to raise it. And in sight of this immeasurability of life, no sadness could endure; but only joy that knew no limit, and happy prayers.

But in the midst of this great vision of the Universe the Form that lightened eternally had become invisible, or had vanished to its home in the unseen world of spirits: I was left alone in the centre of a universe of life, and I yearned after some sympathizing being. Suddenly from the starry deeps there came floating through the ocean of light a planetary body; and upon it there stood a woman whose face was as the face of a Madonna: and by her side there stood a child, whose countenance varied not — neither was it magnified as he drew nearer. This child was a king, for I saw that he had a crown upon his head: but the crown was a crown of thorns. Then also I perceived that the

planetary body was our unhappy earth: and, as the earth drew near, this child who had come forth from the starry deeps to comfort me threw upon me a look of gentlest pity and of unutterable love — so that in my heart I had a sudden rapture of joy such as passes all understanding; and I awoke in the tumult of my happiness.

I awoke: but my happiness survived my dream: and I exclaimed — Oh! how beautiful is death, seeing that we die in a world of life and of creation without end! and I blessed God for my life upon earth, but much more for the life in those unseen depths of the universe which are emptied of all but the Supreme Reality, and where no earthly life nor perishable hope can enter.

COMPLAINT OF THE BIRD IN A DARKENED CAGE.

‘Ah!’ said the imprisoned bird, ‘how unhappy were I in my eternal night, but for those melodious tones which sometimes make their way to me like beams of light from afar, and cheer my gloomy day. But I will myself repeat these heavenly melodies like an echo, until I have stamped them in my heart; and then I shall be able to bring comfort to myself in my darkness!’ Thus spoke the little warbler, and soon had learned the sweet airs that were sung to it with voice and instrument. That done, the curtain was raised; for the darkness had been purposely contrived to assist in its instruction. Oh! man, how often dost thou complain of overshadowing grief and of darkness resting upon thy days! And yet what cause for complaint, unless indeed thou hast failed to learn wisdom from suffering? For is not the whole sum of human

life a veiling and an obscuring of the immortal spirit of man? Then first, when the fleshly curtain falls away, may it soar upwards into a region of happier melodies!

ON THE DEATH OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

Ephemera die all at sunset, and no insect of this class has ever sported in the beams of the morning sun.¹⁰¹ Happier are ye, little human ephemera! Ye played only in the ascending beams, and in the early dawn, and in the eastern light; ye drank only of the prelibations of life; hovered for a little space over a world of freshness and of blossoms; and fell asleep in innocence before yet the morning dew was exhaled!

THE PROPHEPIC DEW-DROPS

A delicate child, pale and prematurely wise, was complaining on a hot morning that the poor dew-drops had been too hastily snatched away and not allowed to glitter on the flowers like other happier dew-drops¹⁰² that live the whole night through, and sparkle in the moonlight and through the morning onwards to noon-day: 'The sun,' said the child, 'has chased them away with his heat — or swallowed them in his wrath.' Soon after came rain and a rainbow; whereupon his father pointed upwards — 'See,' said he, 'there stand thy dew-drops gloriously re-set — a glittering jewellery — in the heavens; and the clownish foot tramples on them no more. By this, my child, thou art taught that what withers upon earth blooms again in heaven.' Thus the father spoke, and knew not that he spoke

prefiguring words: for soon after the delicate child, with the morning brightness of his early wisdom, was exhaled, like a dew-drop, into heaven.

ON DEATH.

We should all think of death as a less hideous object, if it simply untenanted our bodies of a spirit, without corrupting them; secondly, if the grief which we experience at the spectacle of our friends' graves were not by some confusion of the mind blended with the image of our own: thirdly, if we had not in this life seated ourselves in a warm domestic nest, which we are unwilling to quit for the cold blue regions of the unfathomable heavens; finally, — if death were denied to us. Once in dreams I saw a human being of heavenly intellectual faculties, and his aspirations were heavenly; but he was chained (methought) eternally to the earth. The immortal old man had five great wounds in his happiness — five worms that gnawed forever at his heart: he was unhappy in spring-time, because *that* is a season of hope — and rich with phantoms of far happier days than any which this aceldama of earth can realize. He was unhappy at the sound of music, which dilates the heart of man into its whole capacity for the infinite, and he cried aloud — 'Away, away! Thou speakest of things which throughout my endless life I have found not, and shall not find!' He was unhappy at the remembrance of earthly affections and dissevered hearts: for love is a plant which may bud in this life, but it must flourish in another. He was unhappy under the glorious spectacle of the starry host, and ejaculated forever in his

heart — ‘So then I am parted from you to all eternity by an impassable abyss: the great universe of suns is above, below, and round about me: but I am chained to a little ball of dust and ashes.’ He was unhappy before the great ideas of Virtue — of Truth — and of God; because he knew how feeble are the approximations to them which a son of earth can make. But this was a dream: God be thanked, that in reality there is no such craving and asking eye directed upwards to heaven — to which death will not one day bring an answer!

IMAGINATION UNTAMED BY THE COARSER REALITIES OF LIFE.

Happy is every actor in the guilty drama of life, to whom the higher illusion within supplies or conceals the external illusion; to whom, in the tumult of his part and its intellectual interest, the bungling landscapes of the stage have the bloom and reality of nature, and whom the loud parting and shocking of the scenes disturb not in his dream!

SATIRICAL NOTICE OF REVIEWERS.

In Swabia, in Saxony, in Pomerania, are towns in which are stationed a strange sort of officers — valuers of author’s flesh, something like our old market-lookers in this town.¹⁰³ They are commonly called tasters (or *Prægustatores*) because they eat a mouthful of every book beforehand, and tell the people whether its flavor be good. We authors, in spite, call them *reviewers*: but I believe an action of defamation would lie against us for such bad words. The tasters write

no books themselves ; consequently they have the more time to look over and tax those of other people. Or, if they do sometimes write books, they are bad ones : which again is very advantageous to them : for who can understand the theory of badness in other people's books so well as those who have learned it by practice in their own ? They are reputed the guardians of literature and the literati for the same reason that St. Nepomuk is the patron saint of bridges and of all who pass over them — viz. because he himself once lost his life from a bridge.

FEMALE TONGUES.

Hippel, the author of the book 'Upon Marriage,' says — 'A woman, that does not talk, must be a stupid woman.' But Hippel is an author whose opinions it is more safe to admire than to adopt. The most intelligent women are often silent amongst women ; and again the most stupid and the most silent are often neither one nor the other except amongst men. In general the current remark upon men is valid also with respect to women — that those for the most part are the greatest thinkers who are the least talkers ; as frogs cease to croak when *light* is brought to the water edge. However, in fact, the disproportionate talking of women arises out of the sedentariness of their labors : sedentary artisans, — as tailors, shoemakers, weavers, — have this habit as well as hypochondriacal tendencies in common with women. Apes do not talk, as savages say, that they may not be set to work : but women often talk double their share — even *because* 'hey work.

FORGIVENESS.

Nothing is more moving to man than the spectacle of reconciliation : our weaknesses are thus indemnified and are not too costly — being the price we pay for the hour of forgiveness : and the archangel, who has never felt anger, has reason to envy the man who subdues it. When thou forgivest, — the man, who has pierced thy heart, stands to thee in the relation of the sea-worm that perforates the shell of the muscle, which straightway closes the wound with a pearl.

The graves of the best of men, of the noblest martyrs, are like the graves of the Herrnhuters (the Moravian brethren) — level, and undistinguishable from the universal earth : and, if the earth could give up her secrets, our whole globe would appear a Westminster Abbey laid flat. Ah ! what a multitude of tears, what myriads of bloody drops have been shed in secrecy about the three corner-trees of earth — the tree of life, the tree of knowledge, and the tree of freedom, — shed, but never reckoned ! It is only great periods of calamity that reveal to us our great men, as comets are revealed by total eclipses of the sun. Not merely upon the field of battle, but also upon the consecrated soil of virtue — and upon the classic ground of truth, thousands of *nameless* heroes must fall and struggle to build up the footstool from which history surveys the *one* hero, whose name is embalmed, bleeding — conquering — and resplendent. The grandest of heroic deeds are those which are performed within four walls and in domestic privacy. And, because history records

only the self-sacrifices of the male sex, and because she dips her pen only in blood, — therefore is it that in the eyes of the unseen spirit of the world our annals appear doubtless far more beautiful and noble than in our own.

THE GRANDEUR OF MAN IN HIS LITTLENESS

Man upon this earth would be vanity and hollowness, dust and ashes, vapor and a bubble, — were it not that he felt himself to be so. That it is possible for him to harbor such a feeling, — *this*, by implying a comparison of himself with something higher in himself, *this* is it which makes him the immortal creature that he is.

NIGHT.

The earth is every day overspread with the veil of night for the same reason as the cages of birds are darkened — viz. that we may the more readily apprehend the higher harmonies of thought in the hush and quiet of darkness. Thoughts, which day turns into smoke and mist, stand about us in the night as lights and flames: even as the column which fluctuates above the crater of Vesuvius, in the daytime appears a pillar of cloud, but by night a pillar of fire.

THE STARS.

Look up, and behold the eternal fields of light that lie round about the throne of God. Had no star ever appeared in the heavens, to man there would have

been no heavens; and he would have laid himself down to his last sleep, in a spirit of anguish, as upon a gloomy earth vaulted over by a material arch — solid and impervious.

MARTYRDOM.

To die for truth — is not to die for one's country, but to die for the world. Truth, like the *Venus dei Medici*, will pass down in thirty fragments to posterity: but posterity will collect and recompose them into a goddess. Then also thy temple, oh eternal Truth! that now stands half below the earth — made hollow by the sepulchres of its witnesses, will raise itself in the total majesty of its proportions; and will stand in monumental granite; and every pillar on which it rests, will be fixed in the grave of a martyr.

THE QUARRELS OF FRIENDS.

Why is it that the most fervent love becomes more fervent by brief interruption and reconciliation? and why must a storm agitate our affections before they can raise the highest rainbow of peace? Ah! for this reason it is — because all passions feel their object to be as eternal as themselves, and no love can admit the feeling that the beloved object should die. And under this feeling of imperishableness it is that we hard fields of ice shock together so harshly, whilst all the while under the sunbeams of a little space of seventy years we are rapidly dissolving.

DREAMING.

But for dreams, that lay Mosaic worlds tessellated with flowers and jewels before the blind sleeper, and surround the recumbent living with the figures of the dead in the upright attitude of life, the time would be too long before we are allowed to rejoin our brothers, parents, friends: every year we should become more and more painfully sensible of the desolation made around us by death, if sleep — the ante-chamber of the grave — were not hung by dreams with the busts of those who live in the other world.

TWO DIVISIONS OF PHILOSOPHIC MINDS.

There are two very different classes of philosophical heads — which, since Kant has introduced into philosophy the idea of positive and negative quantities, I shall willingly classify by means of that distinction. The *positive* intellect is, like the poet, in conjunction with the outer world, the father of an inner world; and, like the poet also, holds up a transforming mirror in which the entangled and distorted members as they are seen in our actual experience enter into new combinations which compose a fair and luminous world: the hypothesis of Idealism (*i. e.* the Fichtéan system) the Monads and the Pre-established Harmony of Leibnitz — and Spinozism are all births of a genial moment, and not the wooden carving of logical toil. Such men therefore as Leibnitz, Plato, Herder, &c. I call positive intellects; because they seek and yield the positive; and because their inner world, having raised itself higher out of the water than in others, thereby

overlooks a larger prospect of island and continents. A negative head, on the other hand, discovers by its acuteness — not any positive truths but the negative (*i. e.* the errors) of other people. Such an intellect, as for example Bayle, one of the greatest of that class, — appraises the funds of others, rather than brings any fresh funds of his own. In lieu of the obscure ideas which he finds he gives us clear ones: but in this there is no positive accession to our knowledge; for all that the clear idea contains in development, exists already by implication in the obscure idea. Negative intellects of every age are unanimous in their abhorrence of everything positive. Impulse, feeling, instinct — everything in short which is incomprehensible, they can endure just once — that is, at the summit of their chain of arguments as a sort of hook on which they may hang them, — but never afterwards.

DIGNITY OF MAN IN SELF-SACRIFICE.

That, for which man offers up his blood or his property, must be more valuable than they. A good man does not fight with half the courage for his own life that he shows in the protection of another's. The mother, who will hazard nothing for herself, will hazard all in defence of her child: — in short, only for the nobility within us — only for virtue, will man open his veins and offer up his spirit: but this nobility — this virtue — presents different phases: with the Christian martyr it is faith; with the savage it is honor; with the republican it is liberty.

FANCY.

Fancy can lay only the past and the future under her copying paper: and every actual presence of the object sets limits to her power: just as water distilled from roses, according to the old naturalists, lost its power exactly at the periodical blooming of the rose.

The older — the more tranquil — and pious a man is, so much the more holy does he esteem all that is *innate*, that is, *feeling* and *power*; whereas in the estimate of the multitude whatsoever is *self-acquired*, the ability of practice and science in general has an undue pre-eminence; for the latter is universally appreciated and therefore even by those who have it not, but the former not at all. In the twilight and the moonshine the fixed stars, which are suns, retire and veil themselves in obscurity; whilst the planets, which are simply earths, preserve their borrowed light unobscured. The elder races of men, amongst whom man *was* more though he had not yet *become* so much, had a childlike feeling of sympathy with all the gifts of the Infinite — for example, with strength — beauty — and good fortune; and even the *involuntary* had a sanctity in their eyes, and was to them a prophecy and a revelation: hence the value they ascribed, and the art of interpretation they applied, to the speeches of children — of madmen — of drunkards — and of dreamers.

As the blind man knows not light, and through that ignorance also of necessity knows not darkness, — so likewise, but for disinterestedness we should know nothing of selfishness, but for slavery nothing of

freedom : there are perhaps in this world many things which remain obscure to us for want of alternating with their opposites.

Derham remarks in his Physico-theology that the deaf hear best in the midst of noise, as, for instance, during the ringing of bells, &c. This must be the reason, I suppose, that the thundering of drums, cannons, &c. accompany the entrance into cities of princes and ministers, who are generally rather deaf, in order that they may the better hear the petitions and complaints of the people.

ANECDOTAGE.¹

THIS orange we mean to squeeze for the public use. Where an author is poor, this is wrong; but Miss Hawkins being upon her own acknowledgment rich (p. 125), keeping "a carriage, to the *propreté* of which she is not indifferent" (p. 253), and being able to give away manors worth more than £1000 per annum (p. 140), it is most clear that her interests ought to bend to those of the public; the public being really in very low circumstances, and quite unable to buy books of luxury and anecdotage.

Who is the author, and what is the book? The author has descended to us from the last century, and has heard of little that has happened since the American war. She is the daughter of Sir John Hawkins, known to the world, 1st, as the historian of music; 2d, as the acquaintance and biographer of Dr. Johnson; 3d, as the object of some vulgar gossip and calumnies made current by Mr. Boswell. Her era being determined, the reader can be at no loss to deduce the rest: her chronology known, all is known. She belongs to the *literati* of those early ages who saw Dr. Johnson in the body, and conversed in the flesh with Goldsmith, Garrick, Bennet Langton, Wilkes and liberty, Sir Joshua,

¹ *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs.* Collected by Letitia Matilda Hawkins.

Hawkesworth, &c., &c. All of these good people she “*found*” (to use her own lively expression) at her father’s house: that is, upon her earliest introduction to her father’s drawing-room at Twickenham, most of them were already in possession. Amongst the “&c., &c.” as we have classed them, were some who really ought not to have been thus slurred over, such as Bishop Percy, Tyrwhitt, Dean Tucker, and Hurd: but others absolutely pose us. For instance, does the reader know anything of one *Israel Mauduit*? We profess to know nothing; no, nor at all the more for his having been the author of “*Considerations on the German War*,” (p. 7): in fact, there have been so many German wars since Mr. Mauduit’s epoch, and the public have since then been called on to “consider” so many “considerations,” that Miss Hawkins must pardon us for declaring, that the illustrious Mauduit (though we remember his name in Lord Orford’s *Memoires*) is now defunct, and that his works have followed him. Not less defunct than Mauduit is the not less illustrious Brettell. Brettell! What Brettell? *What* Brettell! Why, “Wonderful old Colonel Brettell of the Middlesex Militia (p. 10,) who on my requesting him, at eighty-five years of age, to be careful in getting over a five-barred gate, replied, ‘Take care of what? Time was, when I could have jumped over it.’” “Time was!” he says, *was*; but how will *that* satisfy posterity? What proof has the nineteenth century that he did it, or could have done it? So much for Brettell and Mauduit. But last comes one who “*hight Costard*:” and here we are posed indeed. Can this be Shakspeare’s Costard — everybody’s Costard — the

Costard of "Love's Labor's Lost?" But how is that possible? says a grave and learned friend at our elbow. I will affirm it to be impossible. How can any man celebrated by Shakspeare have visited at Twickenham with Dr. Johnson? *That* indeed, we answer, deserves consideration: yet, if he can, where would Costard be more naturally found than at Sir John Hawkins's house, who had himself annotated on Shakspeare, and lived in company with so many other annotators, as Percy, Tyrwhitt, Steevens, &c.? Yet again, at p. 10, and at p. 24, he is called "the learned Costard." Now this is an objection; for Shakspeare's Costard, the old Original Costard, is far from learned. But what of *that*? He had plenty of time to mend his manners, and fit himself for the company of Dr. Johnson: and at p. 80, where Miss Hawkins again affirms that his name was "always preceded by the epithet *learned*," she candidly admits that "he was a feeble, ailing, emaciated man, who had all the appearance of having sacrificed his health to his studies," as well he might, if he had studied from Shakspeare's time to Dr. Johnson's. With all his learning, however, Costard could make nothing of a case which occurred in Sir John Hawkins's grounds; and we confess that we can make no more of it than Costard. "In a paddock," says Miss Hawkins, "we had an oblong piece of water supplied by a sluice. Keeping poultry, this was very convenient for ducks: on a sudden, a prodigious consternation was perceived among the ducks: they were with great difficulty persuaded to take to the water; and, when there, shuddered, grew wet, and were drowned. They were supposed diseased; others were bought at other places; but in

vain! none of *our* ducks could swim. I remember the circumstance calling out much thought and conjecture. The learned George Costard, Dr. Morton, and the medical advisers¹⁰⁴ of the neighborhood, were consulted: every one had a different supposition; and I well recollect my own dissatisfaction with all I heard. It was told of course to Mr. and Mrs. Garrick. Mrs. Garrick would not give credit to it: Garrick himself was not incredulous; and after a discussion, he turned to my father with his jocose impetuosity, and said, 'There's my wife, who will not believe the story of these ducks, and yet she believes in the eleven thousand virgins.'" Most probably the ducks were descended from that "which Samuel Johnson trod on," which, "if it had lived and had not died, had surely been an odd one:" its posterity therefore would be odd ones. However, Costard could make nothing of it: and to this hour the case is an unsolved problem, like the longitude of the northwest passage. Perhaps a water-snake lay basking in the pond.

Of Lord Orford, who, like Costard, was a neighbor and an acquaintance of her father's, Miss Hawkins gives us a very long account; no less than thirty pages (pp. 87-117) being dedicated to him on his first introduction. Amongst his eccentricities, she mentions that "he made no scruple of avowing his thorough want of taste for Don Quixote." This was already known from the *Walpoliana*; where it may be seen that his objection was singularly disingenuous, because built on an incident (the windmill adventure), which, if it were as extravagant as it seems (though it has been palliated by the peculiar appearance of Spanish mills), is yet of

no weight, because not *characteristic* of the work: it contradicts its general character. We shall extract her account of Lord Orford's person and *abroad*, his dress and his address, which is remarkably lively and picturesque, as might have been expected from the pen of a female observer, who was at that time young.

“ His figure was, as every one knows, not merely tall, but more properly *long*, and slender to excess; his complexion, and particularly his hands, of a most unhealthy paleness. I speak of him before the year 1772. His eyes were remarkably bright and penetrating, very dark and lively: his voice was not strong; but his tones were extremely pleasant, and (if I may so say) highly gentlemanly. I do not remember his common gait: he always entered a room in that style of affected delicacy which fashion had then made almost natural; *chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm; knees bent; and feet on tip-toe, as if afraid of a wet floor. His dress in visiting was most usually (in summer when I most saw him) a lavender suit; the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour; partridge silk stockings; and gold buckles; ruffles and frill generally lace. I remember, when a child, thinking him very much under-dressed, if at any time, except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric. In summer, no powder; but his wig combed straight, and showing his very smooth pale forehead, and queued behind; in winter, powder.” What an amusing old coxcomb! ¹⁰⁵

Of Dr. Johnson, we have but one anecdote; but it is very good; and good in the best way — because char

acteristic; being, in fact, somewhat brutal, and very witty. Miss Knight, the author of "Dinarbas," and of "Marcus Flaminius," called to pay him a farewell visit on quitting England for the Continent: this lady (then a young lady) is remarkably large in person; so the old savage dismissed her with the following memorial of his good-nature: "*Go, go my dear; for you are too big for an island.*" As may be supposed, the Doctor is no favorite with Miss Hawkins: but she is really too hard upon our old friend; for she declares "that she never heard him say in any visit six words that could compensate for the trouble of getting to his den, and the disgust of seeing such squalidness as she saw nowhere else." One thing at least Miss Hawkins might have learned from Dr. Johnson; and let her not suppose that we say it in ill-nature: she might have learned to weed her pages of many barbarisms in language which now disfigure them; for instance, the barbarism of "compensate *for* the trouble" — in the very sentence before us — instead of. "compensate the trouble."

Dr. Farmer disappointed Miss Hawkins by "the homeliness of his external." But surely when a man comes to that supper at which he does not eat but is eaten, we have a deeper interest in his wit, which may chance to survive him, than in his beauty, which posterity cannot possibly enjoy any more than the *petits soupers* which it adorned. Had the Doctor been a very Adonis, he could not have done Miss Hawkins so much service as by two of his *propos* which she records: One was, that on a report being mentioned, at her father's table, of Sir Joshua Reynolds having shared the gains

arising from the exhibition of his pictures, with his man-servant, who was fortunately called Ralph, Dr. Farmer quoted against Sir Joshua these two lines from Hudibras : —

“A squire he had whose name was Ralph,
Who in the adventure went his half.”

The other was, that speaking of Dr. Parr, he said that he seemed to have been at a feast of learning (for *learning*, read *languages*) from which he had carried off all the scraps.” Miss Hawkins does not seem to be aware that this is taken from Shakspeare: but, what is still more surprising, she declares herself “absolutely ignorant whether it be praise or censure.” All we shall say on that question is, that we most seriously advise her not to ask Dr. Parr.

Of Paul Whitehead, we are told that his wife “was so nearly idiotic, that she would call his attention in conversation to look at a cow, not as one of singular beauty, but in the words — ‘Mr. Whitehead, there’s a cow.’” On this Miss Hawkins moralizes in a very eccentric way: “He took it,” says she, “most patiently, as he did all such trials of his temper.” Trials of his temper! why, was he jealous of the cow? Had he any personal animosity to the cow? Not only, however, was Paul very patient (at least under his bovine afflictions, and his “trials” in regard to horned cattle), but also Paul was very devout; of which he gave this pleasant assurance: “When I go,” said he, “into St. Paul’s, I admire it as a very fine, grand, beautiful building; and, when I have contemplated its beauty, I come out: but, if I go into Westminster Abbey, d—n me. I’m all devotion.” So, by his own account, Paul ap-

pears to have been a pretty fellow: d—d patient, and d—d devout.

For practical purposes, we recommend to all physicians the following anecdote, which Sir Richard Jebb used to tell of himself: as Miss Hawkins observes, it makes even rapacity comical, and it suggests a very useful and practical hint. "He was attending a nobleman, from whom he had a right to expect a fee of five guineas; he received only three. Suspecting some trick on the part of the steward, from whom he received it, he at the next visit contrived to drop the three guineas. They were picked up, and again deposited in his hand: but he still continued to look on the carpet. His lordship asked if all the guineas were found. 'There must be two guineas still on the carpet,' replied Sir Richard, 'for I have but three.' The hint was taken as he meant."

But of all medical stratagems, commend us to that practiced by Dr. Munckley, who had lived with Sir J. Hawkins during his bachelor days in quality of "chum:" and a chum he was, in Miss Hawkins' words, "not at all calculated to render the chum state happy." This Dr. Munckley, by the bye, was so huge a man-mountain, that Miss Hawkins supposes the blank in the well-known epigram,

"When ——— walks the streets, the paviors cry,
'God bless you, Sir!' and lay their rammers by,"

to have been originally filled up with his name, — but in this she is mistaken. The epigram was written before he was born; and for about 140 years has this empty epigram, like other epigrams *to be let*, been occupied by a succession of big men: we believe that the

original tenant was Dr. Ralph Bathurst. Munckley, however, *might* have been the original tenant, if it had pleased God to let him be born eighty years sooner; for he was quite as well qualified as Bathurst to draw down the blessings of paviers, and to play the part of a "three-man beetle."¹⁰⁶ Of this Miss Hawkins gives a proof which is droll enough: "accidentally encountering suddenly a stout man-servant in a narrow passage, they literally stuck." Each, like Horatius Cocles, in the words of Seneca, *solus implevit poutis angustias*. One of them, it is clear, must have backed; unless, indeed, they are sticking there yet. It would be curious to ascertain *which* of them backed. For the dignity of science, one would hope it was not Munckley. Yet we fear he was capable of any meanness, if Miss Hawkins reports accurately his stratagems upon her father's purse: a direct attack failing, he attacked it indirectly. But Miss Hawkins shall tell her own tale. "He was extremely rapacious, and a very bad economist; and, soon after my father's marriage, having been foiled in his attempt to borrow money of him, he endeavored to atone to himself for this disappointment by protracting the duration of a low fever in which he attended him; making unnecessary visits, and with his hand ever open for a fee." Was there ever such a fellow on this teraqueous globe? Sir John's purse not yielding to a storm, he approaches by mining and sapping, under cover of a low fever. Did this Munckley really exist; or is he but the coinage of Miss Hawkins's brain? If the reader wishes to know what became of this "great" man, we will gratify him. He was "foiled," as we have seen, "in his attempt to borrow money" of Sir J. II.

he was also soon after "foiled" in his attempt to live. Munckley, big Munckley, being "too big for an island" we suppose, was compelled to die; he gave up the ghost: and what seems very absurd both to us and to Miss Hawkins, he continued talking to the last, and went off in the very act of uttering a most prosaic truism, which yet happened to be false in his case: for his final words were, that it was "hard to be taken off 'ust then, when he was beginning to get into practice." Not at all, with such practices as his: where men enter into partnerships with low fevers, it is very fit that they should "back" out of this world as fast as possible; as fast as, in all probability, he had backed down the narrow passage before the stout man-servant. So much for Munckley — big Munckley.

It does not strike us as any "singular feature" (p. 273), in the history of Bartleman, the great singer, "that he lived to occupy the identical house in Berners Street in which his first patron resided." Knowing the house, its *pros* and *cons*, its landlord, &c., surely it was very natural that he should avail himself of his knowledge for his own convenience. But it *is* a very singular fact (p. 160), that our Government should, "merely for want of caution, have sent the *Culloden* ship of war to convey Cardinal York from Naples." This we suppose Miss Hawkins looks upon as ominous of some disaster; for she considers it "*fortunate*" that his Eminence "had sailed before it arrived." Of this same Cardinal York, Miss Hawkins tells us further, that a friend of hers having been invited to dine with him, as all Englishmen were while he kept a table, "found him, as all others did, a good-natured, almost superannuated gen-

tleman, who had his round of civilities and jokes. He introduced some roast beef, by saying that it might not be as good as that in England; *for*, said he, *you know we are but pretenders.*" Yes, the Cardinal was a pretender, but his beef was "legitimate;" unless, indeed, his bulls pretended to be oxen.

On the subject of the Pretender, by the way, we have (at p. 63) as fine a *bon-mot* as the celebrated toast of Dr. Byrom, the Manchester Jacobite. "The Marchioness (the Marchioness of Tweeddale) had been Lady Frances Carteret, a daughter of the Earl of Granville, and had been brought up by her Jacobite aunt, Lady Worsley, one of the most zealous of that party. The Marchioness herself told my father, that on her aunt's upbraiding her when a child with not attending prayers, she answered that she heard her ladyship did not pray for the king. 'Not pray for the king?' said Lady Worsley; 'who says this? I will have you and those who sent you know that I *do* pray for the king; but I do not think it necessary to tell God Almighty *who* is king.'"

This is *naïveté*, which becomes wit to the bystander, though simply the natural expression of the thought to him who utters it. Another instance, no less lively, is the following, mentioned at Strawberry Hill, by "the sister of one of our first statesmen, now deceased." "She had heard a boy, humored to excess, tease his mother for the remains of a favorite dish; mamma at length replied, 'Then do take it, and have done teasing me.' He then flew into a passion, roaring out, 'What did you give it me for? I wanted to have snatched it.'"

The next passage we shall cite relates to a very eminent character indeed, truly respectable, and entirely English, viz., Plum-pudding. The obstinate and inveterate ignorance of Frenchmen on this subject is well known. Their errors are grievous, pitiable, and matter of scorn and detestation to every enlightened mind. In civilization, in trial by jury, and many other features of social happiness, it has been affirmed that the French are two centuries behind us. We believe it. But with regard to plum-pudding, they are at least five centuries in arrear. In the "Omniana," we think it is, Mr. Southey has recorded one of their insane attempts at constructing such a pudding: the monstrous abortion, which on that occasion issued to the light, the reader may imagine; and will be at no loss to understand that volley of "*Diables*," "*Sacres*," and "*Morbleus*," which it called forth, when we mention that these deluded Frenchmen made cheese the basis of their infernal preparation. Now under these circumstances of national infatuation, how admirable must have been the art of an English party, who, in the very city of Paris (that centre of darkness on this interesting subject), and in the very teeth of Frenchmen, did absolutely extort from French hands a real English plum-pudding: yes! compelled a French apothecary, unknowing what he did, to produce an excellent plum-pudding, and had the luxury of a hoax into the bargain. Verily, the *ruse* was *magnifique*; and though it was nearly terminating in bloodshed, yet, doubtless, so superb a story would have been cheaply purchased by one or two lives. Here it follows in Miss Hawkins's own words: "Dr. Schomberg of Reading, in the early part of his life, spent a Christmas

at Paris with some English friends. They were desirous to celebrate the season in the manner of their own country, by having, as one dish at their table, an English plum-pudding; but no cook was found equal to the task of compounding it. A clergyman of the party had indeed an old receipt-book; but this did not sufficiently explain the process. Dr. Schomberg, however, supplied all that was wanting, by throwing the recipe into the form of a prescription, and sending it to an apothecary to be made up. To prevent all possibility of error, he directed that it should be boiled in a cloth, and sent in the same cloth, to be applied at an hour specified. At this hour it arrived borne by the apothecary's assistant, and preceded " (sweet heavens!) " by the apothecary himself, drest according to the professional formality of the time, with a sword. Seeing, when he entered the apartment, instead of signs of sickness, a table well filled, and surrounded by very merry faces, he perceived that he was made a party in a joke that turned on himself, and indignantly laid his hand on his sword; but an invitation to taste his own cookery appeased him; and all was well."

This story we pronounce altogether unique: for, as on the one hand, the art was divine by which the benefits of medical punctuality and accuracy were pressed into the service of a Christmas dinner; so, on the other hand, it is strictly and satirically probable, when told of a French apothecary: for who but a Frenchman, whose pharmacopœia still teems with the monstrous compounds of our ancestors, could have believed that such a preparation was seriously designed for a cataplasm.

In our next extracts we come upon ground rather tender and unsafe for obstinate skeptics. We have often heard of learned doctors, from Shrewsbury, suppose, going by way of Birmingham to Oxford; and at Birmingham, under the unfortunate ambiguity of "the Oxford coach," getting into that *from* Oxford, which, by nightfall, safely restored the astonished doctor to astonished Shrewsbury. Such a case is sad and pitiful; but what is that to the case (p. 164) of Wilkes the painter, who, being "anxious to get a likeness" of "good Dr. Foster" (the same whom Pope has honored with the couplet, —

"Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well")

"attended his meeting one Sunday evening;" and very naturally, not being acquainted with Dr. Foster's person, sketched a likeness of the clergyman whom he found officiating; which clergyman happened unfortunately to be — not the doctor — but Mr. Morris, an occasional substitute of his. The mistake remained undiscovered: the sketch was elaborately copied in a regular picture; the picture was elaborately engraved in mezzotinto; and to this day the portrait of one Mr. Morris "officiates" for that of the celebrated Dr. Foster. Living and dead he was Dr. Foster's substitute. Even this, however, is a trifle to what follows: the case "of a Baronet, who must be nameless, who proposed to visit Rome, and previously to learn the language; but by some mistake, or imposition, engaged a German, who taught only his own language, and proceeded in the study of it vigorously for three months before he discovered his error." With all deference to the au

thority of Horace Walpole, from whom the anecdote originally comes, we confess that we are staggered; and must take leave, in the stoical phrase, to "suspend;" in fact, we must consult our friends before we can contract for believing it; at present, all we shall say about it is, that we greatly fear the Baronet "must," as Miss Hawkins observes, "be nameless."

We must also consult our friends on the propriety of believing the little incident which follows, though attributed to "a very worthy modest young man:" for it is remarkable that of this very modest young man is recorded but one act, viz., the most impudent in the book. "He was walking in the Mall of St. James's Park, when they met two fine young women, drest in straw hats, and, at least to appearance, unattended. His friend offered him a bet that he did not go up to one of those rustic beauties, and salute her. He accepted the bet; and in a very civil manner, and probably explaining the cause of his boldness, he thought himself sure of success, when he became aware that it was the Princess Caroline, daughter of George II. who, with one of her sisters, was taking the refreshment of a walk in complete disguise. In the utmost confusion he bowed, begged pardon, and retreated; whilst their Royal Highnesses, with great good humor, laughed at his mistake."

We shall conclude our extracts with the following story, as likely to interest our fair readers:—

"Lady Lucy Meyrick was by birth the Lady Lucy Pitt, daughter to the Earl of Londonderry, and sister to the last who bore that title. She was, of course, nearly related to all the great families of that name

and losing her parents very early in life, was left under the guardianship of an uncle, who lived in James Street, Buckingham Gate. This house was a most singularly uncouth dismal dwelling, in appearance very much of the Vanburgh style of building; and the very sight of it would justify almost any measure to get out of it. It excited every one's curiosity to ask, What is this place? What can it be for? It had a front of very dark heavy brick-work; very small windows, with sashes immensely thick. In this gay mansion, which looked against the blank window side of the large house in St. James's Park, twenty years ago Lord Milford's, but backwards into a market-gardener's ground, was Lady Lucy Meyrick to reside with her uncle and his daughter, a girl a little older than herself. The young ladies, who had formed a strict friendship, were kept under great restraint, which they bore as two lively girls may be supposed to have done. Their endurances soon reached the ear of two Westminster scholars of one of the Welsh families of Meyrick, who, in the true spirit of knight-errantry, concerted with them a plan for escaping, which they carried into effect. Having gone thus far, there was nothing for the courteous knights to do, but to marry the fair damsels to whom they had rendered this essential service; and for this purpose they took them to the Fleet, or to May-Fair, in both which places marriages were solemnized in the utmost privacy. Here the two couples presented themselves; a baker's wife attending upon the ladies. Lady Lucy was then, and to the end of her life, one of the smallest women I ever saw: she was at the same time not more than fourteen years of age; and, being

in the dress of a child, the person officiating objected to performing the ceremony for her. This extraordinary scrupulosity was distressing; but her ladyship met it by a lively reply — that her cousin might be married first, and then lend her her gown, which would make her look more womanly: but I suppose her right of precedence was regarded; for she used to say herself that she was at last married in the baker's wife's gown. Yet even now, if report be true, an obstacle intervened: the yeung ladies turned fickle; not, indeed, on the question 'to be or not to be' married, but on their choice of partners; and I was assured that they actually changed — Lady Lucy taking to herself, or acquiescing in taking, the elder brother. What their next step was to have been I know not: the ladies, who had not been missed, returned to their place of endurance; the young gentlemen to school, where they remained, keeping the secret close. When the school next broke up, they went home: and, probably, whilst waiting for courage to avow, or opportunity to disclose, or accident to betray for them the matter, a newly arrived guest fresh from London, in reply, perhaps, to the usual question — What news from town? reported an odd story of two Westminster scholars, names unknown, who had (it was said) married two girls in the neighborhood of the school. The countenances of the two lads drew suspicions upon them; and, confession being made, Lady Lucy was fetched to the house of her father-in-law, His lady, seeing her so very much of a child in appearance, said, on receiving her, in a tone of vexation — 'Why, child, what can we do with you? Such a baby as you are, what can you know?' With equal humil

ity and frankness Lady Lucy replied — ‘It is very true, Madam, that I am very young and very ignorant; but whatever you will teach me I will learn.’ All the good lady’s prejudice was now overcome; and Lady Lucy’s conduct proved the sincerity of her submission. She lived seven years in Wales under the tuition of her mother-in-law, conforming to the manners, tempers; and prejudices of her new relations.”

We have now “squeezed” a volume of 351 pages, according to our promise: we hope Miss Hawkins will forgive us. She must also forgive us for gently blaming her diction. She says (p. 277), “I read but little English.” We thought as much; and wish she read more. The words “duple” (p. 145), “decadence” (p. 123), and “cumbent” (p.), all point to another language than English: as to “*maux*” (p. 254), we know not what language it belongs to, unless it be Coptic. It is certainly not “too big for an island;” but it will not do for this island, and we beg it may be transported. Miss Hawkins says a worse thing, however, of the English language, than that she reads it but little: “instead of admiring my native language,” says she, “I feel fettered by it.” That may be: but her inability to use it without difficulty and constraint is the very reason why she ought not to pronounce upon its merits: we cannot allow of any person’s deciding on the value of an instrument until he has shown himself master of its powers in their whole compass. For some purposes (and those the highest), the English language is a divine instrument: no language is so for all.

When Miss Hawkins says that she reads “little

English," the form of the expression implies that she reads a good deal of some more favored language: may we take the liberty of asking — what? It is not Welsh, we hope? nor Syriac? nor Sungskrita? We say *hope*, for none of these will yield her anything for her next volume: throughout the Asiatic Researches no soul has been able to unearth a Sanscrit bon-mot. Is it Latin? or Greek? Perhaps both: for besides some sprinklings of both throughout the volume, she gives us at the end several copies of Latin and Greek verses. These, she says, are her brother's: be they whose they may, we must overhaul them. The Latin are chiefly Sapphics, the Greek chiefly Iambics; the following is a specimen of the Sapphics:—

“ One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns;
 If your daughters will not eat them, give them to your sons.
 But, if you have none of those pretty little elves,
 You cannot do better than eat them yourselves.”

“ Idem Latine redditum a Viro Clariss. Henrico Hawkins.

“ Asse placentam cupiasne solam?
 Asse placentas cupiasne binas?
 Ecce placentæ, teneræ, tepentes,
 Et cruce gratæ.

“ Respuant natæ? dato, quæso, natis:
 Parvulos tales tibi si negârint
 Fata, tu tandem (superest quid ultra?)
 Sumito, præsto est.”

Our opinion of this translation is, that it is worthy of the original. We hope this criticism will prove satisfactory. At the same time, without offence to Mr. Hawkins, may we suggest that the baker's man has rather the advantage in delicacy of expression and structure of verse? He has also distinguished clearly the alternative of sons and daughters, which the un-

fortunate ambiguity of “*natis*” has prevented Mr. Hawkins from doing. Perhaps Mr. Hawkins will consider this against a future edition. Another, viz., a single hexameter, is entitled, “*De Amandâ, clavibus amissis.*” Here we must confess to a signal mortification, the table of “*Contents*” having prepared us to look for some sport; for the title is there printed (by mistake, as it turns out), “*De Amandâ, clavis amissis,*” *i. e.*, *On Amanda, upon the loss of her cudgels*; whereas it ought to have been *clavibus amissis*, on the loss of her keys. Sheustone used to thank God that his name was not adapted to the vile designs of the punster; perhaps some future punster may take the conceit out of him on that point by extracting a compound pun from his name combined with some other word. The next best thing, however, to having a name, or title, that is absolutely pun-proof, is the having one which yields only to Greek puns, or Carthaginian (*i. e.* *Punic*) puns. Lady Moira has that felicity, on whom Mr. Hawkins has thus punned very seriously in a Greek hexameter:—

“On the death of the Countess of Moira’s new-born infant.

“Μοιρα καλη, μ’ ετεκες μ’ ανελες μεν, Μοιρα κραταιη.”

That is: “*Lovely Moira, thou gavest me birth: thou also, violent Moira, tookest me away:*” where the first *Μοιρα* means the Countess, the second is the Greek term for mortal destiny.

Of the iambs we shall give one specimen:—

“Impromptu returned with my ead pencil, which I had left on
his table.

“Βοηθος εμι· καλλω παντ’ εξ εμου·

’Εκ του μολιβδου η νοησις ερχεται.”

Pencil is supposed to speak:—

“I am a ministerial assistant: from me come all things beautiful. And thus from lead comes intellectual light.” The second clause will bear another version, which does not heal its exaggeration, in representing *all* beauty as a product of the lead pencil. And *molibdos*, we fear, which means the common household lead of cisterns, tubes, etc., will not express the *plumbago* of the artist’s pencil.

The thought is pretty: some little errors there certainly are, as in the contest with the baker’s man; and in this, as in all his iambics (especially in the three from the Arabic), some little hiatuses in the metre, not adapted to the fastidious race of an Athenian audience. But these little hiatuses, these “little enormities” (to borrow a phrase from the sermon of a country clergyman), *will* occur in the best regulated verses. On the whole, our opinion of Mr. Hawkins, as a Greek poet, is, that in seven hundred, or say seven hundred and fifty years — he may become a pretty — yes, we will say, a *very* pretty poet: as he cannot be more than one tenth of that age at present, we look upon his performances as singularly promising. *Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.*¹⁰⁷

To return to Miss Hawkins; there are some blunders in facts up and down her book: such, for instance, as that of supposing Sir Francis Drake to have commanded in the succession of engagements with the Spanish Armada of 1588; which is the more remarkable, as her own ancestor was so distinguished a person in those engagements. But, upon the whole, her work, if weeded of some trifling tales (as what relates to the

young Marquis of Tweeddale's dress, etc.), is creditable to her talents. Her opportunities of observation have been great; she has generally made good use of them; and her tact for the ludicrous is striking and useful in a book of this kind. We hope that she will soon favor us with a second volume; and, in that case, we cannot doubt that we shall again have an orange to squeeze for the public use.

NOTES.

NOTE 1. Page 9.

MR. CAMPBELL, the latest editor of Shakspeare's dramatic works, observes that 'the poet's name has been variously written Shaxpeare, Shackspeare, Shakspeare, and Shakspere : ' to which varieties might be added Shagspere, from the Worcester Marriage License, published in 1836. But the fact is, that by combining with all the differences in spelling the first syllable, all those in spelling the second, more than twenty-five distinct varieties of the name may be expanded, (like an algebraic series,) for the choice of the curious in mis-spelling. Above all things, those varieties which arise from the intercalation of the middle *e*, (that is, the *e* immediately before the final syllable *spear*,) can never be overlooked by those who remember, at the opening of the Dunciad, the note upon this very question about the orthography of Shakspeare's name, as also upon the other great question about the title of the immortal Satire, Whether it ought not to have been the Dunceiade, seeing that Dunce, its great author and progenitor, cannot possibly dispense with the letter *e*. Meantime we must remark, that the first three of Mr. Campbell's variations are mere caprices of the press; as is Shagspere; or, more probably, this last euphonious variety arose out of the gross clownish pronunciation of the two hiccuping '*marksmen*' who rode over to Worcester for the license; and one cannot forbear laughing at the bishop's secretary for having been so misled by two varlets, professedly incapable of signing their own names. The same drunken rillains had cut down the bride's name *Hathaway* into *Hathwey*. Finally, to treat the matter with seriousness, Sir Frederick Madden has shown, in his recent letter to the Society of Antiquaries, that the poet himself in all probability wrote the name uniformly

Shakspere. Orthography, both of proper names, of appellatives, and of words universally, was very unsettled up to a period long subsequent to that of Shakspeare. Still it must usually have happened that names written variously and laxly by others, would be written uniformly by the owners; especially by those owners who had occasion to sign their names frequently, and by literary people, whose attention was often, as well as consciously, directed to the proprieties of spelling. *Shakspeare* is now too familiar to the eye for any alteration to be attempted; but it is pretty certain that Sir Frederick Madden is right in stating the poet's own signature to have been uniformly *Shakspere*. It is so written twice in the course of his will, and it is so written on a blank leaf of Florio's English translation of Montaigne's Essays; a book recently discovered, and sold, on account of its autograph, for a hundred guineas.

NOTE 2. Page 10.

But, as a proof that, even in the case of royal christenings, it was not thought pious to 'tempt God,' as it were by delay, Edward VI., the only son of Henry VIII., was born on the 12th day of October, in the year 1537. And there was a delay on account of the sponsors, since the birth was not in London. Yet how little that delay was made, may be seen by this fact: The birth took place in the dead of the night, the day was Friday; and yet, in spite of all delay, the christening was most pompously celebrated on the succeeding Monday. And Prince Arthur, the elder brother of Henry VIII., was christened on the very next Sunday succeeding to his birth, notwithstanding an inevitable delay, occasioned by the distance of Lord Oxford, his godfather, and the excessive rains, which prevented the earl being reached by couriers, or himself reaching Winchester, without extraordinary exertions.

NOTE 3. Page 17.

A great modern poet refers to this very case of music entering the mouldy chambers of the dull idiot's brain; but in support of what seems to us a baseless hypothesis.

NOTE 4. Page 18.

Probably Addison's fear of the national feeling was a good deal

strengthened by his awe of Milton and of Dryden, both of whom had expressed a homage towards Shakspeare which language cannot transcend. Amongst his political friends also were many intense admirers of Shakspeare.

NOTE 5. Page 20.

He who is weak enough to kick and spurn his own native literature, even if it were done with more knowledge than is shown by Lord Shaftesbury, will usually be kicked and spurned in his turn; and accordingly it has often been remarked that the Characteristics are unjustly neglected in our days. For Lord Shaftesbury, with all his pedantry, was a man of great talents. Leibnitz had the sagacity to see this through the mists of a translation.

NOTE 6. Page 21.

Perhaps the most bitter political enemy of Charles I. will have the candor to allow that, for a prince of those times, he was truly and eminently accomplished. His knowledge of the arts was considerable; and, as a patron of art, he stands foremost amongst all British sovereigns to this hour. He said truly of himself, and wisely as to the principle, that he understood English law as well as a gentleman ought to understand it; meaning that an attorney's minute knowledge of forms and technical niceties was illiberal. Speaking of him as an author, we must remember that the *Eikon Basilike* is still unappropriated; that question is still open. But supposing the king's claim negatived, still, in his controversy with Henderson, in his negotiations at the Isle of Wight and elsewhere, he discovered a power of argument, a learning and a strength of memory, which are truly admirable; whilst the whole of his accomplishments are recommended by a modesty and a humility as rare as they are unaffected.

NOTE 7. Page 25.

The necessity of compression obliges us to omit many arguments and references by which we could demonstrate the fact, that Shakspeare's reputation was always in a progressive state; allowing only for the interruption of about seventeen years, which this poet, in common with all others, sustained, not so much from the state of war, (which did not fully occupy four of those years,) as

from the triumph of a gloomy fanaticism. Deduct the twenty-three years of the seventeenth century, which had elapsed before the first folio appeared, to this space add seventeen years of fanatical madness, during fourteen of which *all* dramatic entertainments were suppressed, the remainder is sixty years. And surely the sale of four editions of a vast folio in that space of time was an expression of an abiding interest. *No other poet, except Spenser, continued to sell throughout the century.* Besides, in arguing the case of a *dramatic* poet, we must bear in mind, that although readers of learned books might be diffused over the face of the land, and readers of poetry would be chiefly concentrated in the metropolis; and such persons would have no need to buy what they heard at the theatres. But then comes the question, whether Shakspeare kept possession of the theatres. And we are really humiliated by the gross want of sense which has been shown, by Malone chiefly, but also by many others, in discussing this question. From the Restoration to 1682, says Malone, no more than four plays of Shakspeare's were performed by a principal company in London. 'Such was the lamentable taste of those times, that the plays of Fletcher, Jonson, and Shirley, were much oftener exhibited than those of our author.' What cant is this! If that taste were 'lamentable,' what are we to think of our own times, when plays a thousand times below those of Fletcher, or even of Shirley, continually displace Shakspeare? Shakspeare would himself have exulted in finding that he gave way only to dramatists so excellent. And, as we have before observed, both then and now, it is the very familiarity with Shakspeare, which often banishes him from audiences honestly in quest of relaxation and amusement. Novelty is the very soul of such relaxation; but in our closets, when we are *not* unbending, when our minds are in a state of tension from intellectual cravings, then it is that we resort to Shakspeare: and oftentimes those who honor him most, like ourselves, are the most impatient of seeing his divine scenes disfigured by unequal representation, (good, perhaps, in a single personation, bad in all the rest;) or to hear his divine thoughts mangled in the recitation; or, (which is worst of all,) to hear them dishonored and defeated by imperfect apprehension in the audience, or by defective sympathy. Meantime, if one theatre played only four of Shakspeare's dramas, another played at least seven. But

the grossest fault of Malone is, in fancying the numerous alterations so many insults to Shakspeare, whereas they expressed as much homage to his memory as if the unaltered dramas had been retained. The substance *was* retained. The changes were merely concessions to the changing views of scenical propriety; sometimes, no doubt, made with a simple view to the revolution effected by Davenant at the Restoration, in bringing *scenes* (in the painter's sense) upon the stage; sometimes also with a view to the altered fashions of the audience during the suspensions of the action, or perhaps to the introduction of *after-pieces*, by which, of course, the time was abridged for the main performance. A volume might be written upon this subject. Meantime let us never be told, that a poet was losing, or had lost his ground, who found in his lowest depression, amongst his almost idolatrous supporters, a great king distracted by civil wars, a mighty republican poet distracted by puritanical fanaticism, the greatest successor by far of that great poet, a papist and a bigoted royalist, and finally, the leading actor of the century, who gave and reflected the ruling impulses of his age.

NOTE 8. Page 27.

One of the profoundest tests by which we can measure the congeniality of an author with the national genius and temper, is the degree in which his thoughts or his phrases interweave themselves with our daily conversation, and pass into the currency of the language. *Few French authors, if any, have imparted one phrase to the colloquial idiom*; with respect to Shakspeare, a large dictionary might be made of such phrases as 'win golden opinions,' 'in my mind's eye,' 'patience on a monument,' 'o'erstep the modesty of nature,' 'more honor'd in the breach than in the observance,' 'palmy state,' 'my poverty and not my will consents,' and so forth, without end. This reinforcement of the general language, by aids from the mintage of Shakspeare, had already commenced in the seventeenth century.

NOTE 9. Page 28.

In fact, by way of representing to himself the system or scheme of the English roads, the reader has only to imagine one great **etter X**, or a St. Andrew's cross, laid down from north to south

and decussating at Birmingham. Even Coventry, which makes a slight variation for one or two roads, and so far disturbs this decussation, by shifting it eastwards, is still in Warwickshire.

NOTE 10. Page 34.

And probably so called by some remote ancestor who had emigrated from the forest of Ardennes. in the Netherlands, and *now* forever memorable to English ears from its proximity to Waterloo

NOTE 11. Page 36.

Let not the reader impute to us the gross anachronism of making an estimate for Shakspeare's days in a coin which did not exist until a century, within a couple of years, after Shakspeare's birth, and did not settle to the value of twenty-one shillings until a century after his death. The nerve of such an anachronism would lie in putting the estimate into a mouth of that age. And this is precisely the blunder into which the foolish forger of Vortigern, &c, has fallen. He does not indeed directly mention guineas; but indirectly and virtually he does, by repeatedly giving us accounts imputed to Shakspearian contemporaries, in which the sum total amounts to £5 5s.; or to £26 5s.; or, again, to £17 17s. 6d. A man is careful to subscribe £14 14s., and so forth. But how could such amounts have arisen unless under a secret reference to guineas, which were not in existence until Charles II.'s reign; and, moreover, to guineas at their final settlement by law into twenty-one shillings each, which did not take place until George I.'s reign?

NOTE 12. Page 36.

Thomas Campbell, the poet, in his eloquent Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakspeare, prefixed to a popular edition of the poet's dramatic works. London, 1838.

NOTE 13. Page 37.

After all the assistance given to such equations between different times or different places by Sir George Shuckborough's tables, and other similar investigations, it is still a very difficult problem, complex, and, after all, merely tentative in the results, to assign the true value in such cases; not only for the obvious

reason, that the powers of money have varied in different directions with regard to different objects, and in different degrees where the direction has on the whole continued the same, but because the very objects to be taken into computation are so indeterminate, and vary so much, not only as regards century and century, kingdom and kingdom, but also, even in the same century and the same kingdom, as regards rank and rank. That which is a mere necessary to one, is a luxurious superfluity to another. And, in order to ascertain these differences, it is an indispensable qualification to have studied the habits and customs of the several classes concerned, together with the variations of those habits and customs.

NOTE 14. Page 45.

Never was the *esse quam videri* in any point more strongly discriminated than in this very point of gallantry to the female sex, as between England and France. In France, the verbal homage to woman is so excessive as to betray its real purpose, viz., that it is a mask for secret contempt. In England, little is said; but, in the meantime, we allow our sovereign ruler to be a woman; which in France is impossible. Even that fact is of some importance, but less so than what follows. In every country whatsoever, if any principle has a deep root in the moral feelings of the people, we may rely upon its showing itself, by a thousand evidences amongst the very lowest ranks, and in their daily intercourse, and their *undress* manners. Now in England there is, and always has been, a manly feeling, most widely diffused, of unwillingness to see labors of a coarse order, or requiring muscular exertions, thrown upon women. Pauperism, amongst other evil effects, has sometimes locally disturbed this predominating sentiment of Englishmen; but never at any time with such depth as to kill the root of the old hereditary manliness. Sometimes at this day, a gentleman, either from carelessness, or from overruling force of convenience, or from real defect of gallantry, will allow a female servant to carry his portmanteau for him, though, after all, that spectacle is a rare one. And everywhere women of all ages engage in the pleasant, nay elegant labors of the hay-field; but in Great Britain women are never suffered to mow, which is a most athletic and exhausting labor.

nor to load a cart, nor to drive a plough or hold it. In France, on the other hand, before the Revolution, (at which period the pseudo-homage, the lip-honor, was far more ostentatiously professed towards the female sex than at present,) a Frenchman of credit, and vouching for his statement by the whole weight of his name and personal responsibility, (M. Simond, now an American citizen,) records the following abominable scene as one of no uncommon occurrence. A woman was in some provinces yoked side by side with an ass to the plough or the harrow; and M. Simond protests that it excited no horror to see the driver distributing his lashes impartially between the woman and her brute yoke-fellow. So much for the wordy pomps of French gallantry. In England, we trust, and we believe, that any man caught in such a situation, and in such an abuse of his power, (supposing the case otherwise a possible one,) would be killed on the spot.

NOTE 15. Page 48.

Amongst the people of humble rank in England, who only were ever asked in church, until the new-fangled systems of marriage came up within the last ten or fifteen years, during the currency of the three Sundays on which the banns were proclaimed by the clergyman from the reading desk, the young couple elect were said jocosely to be 'hanging in the bell-ropes;' alluding perhaps to the joyous peal contingent on the final completion of the marriage.

NOTE 16. Page 60.

In a little memoir of Milton, which the author of this article drew up some years ago for a public society, and which is printed in an abridged shape,* he took occasion to remark, that Dr. Johnson, who was meanly anxious to revive this slander against Milton, as well as some others, had supposed Milton himself to have this flagellation in his mind, and indirectly to confess it, in one of his Latin poems, where, speaking of Cambridge, and declaring that he has no longer any pleasure in the thoughts of revisiting that university, he says,

'Nec duri libet usque minas preferre magistri,
Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.'

* [See page 89 of this volume.]

This last line the malicious critic would translate — ‘ And other things insufferable to a man of my temper.’ But, as we then observed, *ingenium* is properly expressive of the *intellectual* constitution, whilst it is the *moral* constitution that suffers degradation from personal chastisement — the sense of honor, of personal dignity, of justice, &c. *Indoles* is the proper term for this latter idea ; and in using the word *ingenium*, there cannot be a doubt that Milton alluded to the dry scholastic disputations, which were shocking and odious to his fine poetical genius. If, therefore, the vile story is still to be kept up in order to dishonor a great man, at any rate let it not in future be pretended that any countenance to such a slander can be drawn from the confessions of the poet himself.

NOTE 17. Page 68.

And singular enough it is, as well as interesting, that Shakspeare had so entirely superseded to his own ear and memory the name Hamnet by the dramatic name of Hamlet, that in writing his will, he actually misspells the name of his friend Sadler, and calls him Hamlet. His son, however, who should have familiarized the true name to his ear, had then been dead for twenty years.

NOTE 18. Page 72.

‘ I have heard that Mr. Shakspeare was a natural wit, without any art at all. He frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for itt had an allowance so large, that he spent at the rate of £1,000 a year, as I have heard. Shakspeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson, had a merie meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted.’ (Diary of the Rev. John Ward, A. M., Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, extending from 1648 to 1679, p. 183. Lond. 1839, 8vo.)

NOTE 19. Page 72.

It is naturally to be supposed that Dr. Hall would attend the sick bed of his father-in-law ; and the discovery of this gentleman’s medical diary promised some gratification to our curiosity

as to the cause of Shakspeare's death. Unfortunately, it does not commence until the year 1617.

NOTE 20. Page 73.

An exception ought perhaps to be made for Sir Walter Scott and for Cervantes; but with regard to all other writers, Dante, suppose, or Ariosto amongst Italians, Camoens amongst those of Portugal, Schiller amongst Germans, however ably they may have been naturalized in foreign languages, as all of those here mentioned (excepting only Ariosto) have in one part of their works been most powerfully naturalized in English, it still remains true, (and the very sale of the books is proof sufficient,) that an alien author never does take root in the general sympathies out of his own country; he takes his station in libraries, he is read by the man of learned leisure, he is known and valued by the refined and the elegant, but he is not (what Shakspeare is for Germany and America) in any proper sense a *popular* favorite.

NOTE 21. Page 74.

It will occur to many readers, that perhaps Homer may furnish the sole exception to this sweeping assertion. Any *but* Homer is clearly and ludicrously below the level of the competition; but even Homer, 'with his tail on,' (as the Scottish Highlanders say of their chieftains when belted by their ceremonial retinues,) musters nothing like the force which *already* follows Shakspeare; and be it remembered, that Homer sleeps and has long slept as a subject of criticism or commentary, while in Germany as well as England, and *now even in France*, the gathering of wits to the vast equipage of Shakspeare is advancing in an accelerated ratio. There is, in fact, a great delusion current upon this subject. Innumerable references to Homer, and brief critical remarks on this or that pretension of Homer, this or that scene, this or that passage, lie scattered over literature ancient and modern; but the express works dedicated to the separate service of Homer are, after all, not many. In Greek we have only the large Commentary of Eustathius, and the Scholia of Didymus, &c.; in French little or nothing before the prose translation of the seventeenth century, which Pope esteemed 'elegant,' and the skirmishings of Madame Dacier, La Motte, &c.; in English, be-

sides the various translations and their prefaces, (which, by the way, began as early as 1555,) nothing of much importance until the elaborate preface of Pope to the Iliad, and his elaborate post-script to the Odyssey — nothing certainly before that, and very little indeed since that, except Wood's Essay on the Life and Genius of Homer. On the other hand, of the books written in illustration or investigation of Shakspeare, a very considerable library might be formed in England, and another in Germany.

NOTE 22. Page 76.

Apartment is here used, as the reader will observe, in its true and continental acceptation, as a division or *compartment* of a house including many rooms; a suite of chambers, but a suite which is partitioned off, (as in palaces,) not a single chamber; a sense so commonly and so erroneously given to this word in England.

NOTE 23. Page 78.

And hence, by parity of reason, under the opposite circumstances, under the circumstances which, instead of abolishing most emphatically drew forth the sexual distinctions, viz., in the *comic* aspects of social intercourse, the reason that we see no women on the Greek stage; the Greek Comedy, unless when it affects the extravagant fun of farce, rejects women.

NOTE 24. Page 81.

It may be thought, however, by some readers, that Æschylus, in his fine phantom of Darius, has approached the English ghost. As a foreign ghost we would wish (and we are sure that our excellent readers would wish) to show every courtesy and attention to this apparition of Darius. It has the advantage of being royal, an advantage which it shares with the ghost of the royal Dane. Yet how different, how removed by a total world, from that of any of Shakspeare's ghosts! Take that of Banquo, for instance. How shadowy, how unreal, yet how real! Darius is a mere state ghost — a diplomatic ghost. But Banquo — he exists only for Macbeth; the guests do not see him, yet how solemn, how real, how heart-searching he is.

NOTE 25. Page 82.

Caliban has not yet been thoroughly fathomed. For all Shakespeare's great creations are like works of nature, subjects of inexhaustible study. It was this character of whom Charles I. and some of his ministers expressed such fervent admiration; and, among other circumstances, most justly they admired the new language almost with which he is endowed, for the purpose of expressing his fiendish and yet carnal thoughts of hatred to his master. Caliban is evidently not meant for scorn, but for abomination mixed with fear and partial respect. He is purposely brought into contrast with the drunken Trinculo and Stephano, with an advantageous result. He is much more intellectual than either, uses a more elevated language, not disfigured by vulgarisms, and is not liable to the low passion for plunder as they are. He is mortal, doubtless, as his 'dam' (for Shakespeare will not call her mother) Sycorax. But he inherits from her such qualities of power as a witch could be supposed to bequeath. He trembles indeed before Prospero; but that is, as we are to understand, through the moral superiority of Prospero in Christian wisdom; for when he finds himself in the presence of dissolute and unprincipled men, he rises at once into the dignity of intellectual power.

NOTE 26. Page 89.

I believe somewhere about twenty-nine years ago: a date which I deduce indirectly from a casual recollection that the composition of this little paper synchronized pretty exactly in its close with the commencement of the ever-memorable Bristol riots on occasion of Sir Charles Wetherell's official visit.

NOTE 27. Page 89.

Which service, however, I have little doubt, will by this time have been much more adequately performed than I myself could hope to perform it, by Mr. Masson in his recent *Life of Milton*; founding my hopes, in this particular case, specially upon the very distinguished success which crowned his labors upon Chatterton; labors the same

m kind, but in degree much more severe, as applied to more slender materials.

NOTE 28. Page 90.

I. e. since Dr. Johnson gave utterance to that scoff.

NOTE 29. Page 93.

Polemic.—The reader ought to be aware that this word, though commonly restricted through pure ignorance to controversial *theology*, is not properly subject to any such limitation: what is hostile is unconditionally polemic.

NOTE 30. Page 94.

Lobsters.—A cavalry regiment (so called from their scarlet uniform) raised and commanded by Sir Arthur for the Parliament.

NOTE 31. Page 95.

A feat, however, which our Sir Robert Sale found it possible to repeat at Jellalabad in 1842, and under this important disadvantage,—that our earthquake made no pretence to equity or neutrality, but most unfairly sided with Akbar Khan and his Affghans; whereas Hannibal's struck out right and left, and scattered its favors *slantingly* [to speak after Cousin Jonathan] through both armies.

NOTE 32. Page 97.

Not meaning, however, as so many people do, insolently to gainsay the verdict of Milton himself, with whom, for my own part, making the distinctions that *he* would make, I have always coincided. The poet himself is often the best critic on his own works; and in this case Milton expressed with some warmth, and perhaps scorn, his preference of the *Paradise Regained*. Doubtless what disgusted him naturally enough was, that too often he found the disparagers of the one Paradise quite as guiltless of all real acquaintance with it as were the *proneurs* of the other. Else the distribution of merits is apparently this: in the later poem the execution is more highly finished; or, at least, partially so. In the elder and larger poem, the scenical

opportunities are more colossal and more various. Heaven opening to eject her rebellious children; the unvoyageable depths of ancient Chaos, with its "anarch old" and its eternal war of wrecks; these traversed by that great leading angel that drew after him the third part of the heavenly host; earliest paradise dawning upon the warrior-angel out of this far-distant "sea without shore" of chaos; the dreadful phantoms of sin and death, prompted by secret sympathy, and snuffing the distant scent of "mortal change on earth," chasing the steps of their great progenitor and sultan; finally, the heart-freezing visions, shown and narrated to Adam, of human misery, through vast successions of shadowy generations; — all these scenical opportunities offered in the *Paradise Lost* become in the hands of the mighty artist elements of undying grandeur not matched on earth. The compass being so much narrower in the *Paradise Regained*, if no other reason operated, inevitably the splendors are sown more thinly. But the great vision of the temptation, the banquet in the wilderness, the wilderness itself, the terrific pathos of the ruined archangel's speech, 'Tis true I am that spirit unfortunate, &c. (the effect of which, when connected with the stern un pitying answer, is painfully to shock the reader), all these proclaim the ancient skill and the ancient power. And, as regards the skill naturally brightened by long practice, that succession of great friezes which the archangel unrolls in the pictures of Athens, Rome, and Parthia, besides their native and intrinsic beauty, have an unrivalled beauty of position through the reflex illustration which reciprocally they give and receive.

NOTE 33. Page 99.

In candor I must add, *if uncultured*. This will suggest a great addition to the one in a hundred whom I have supposed capable of sympathy with the higher class of models. For the majority of men have had no advantages, no training, no discipline. How extravagantly unjust, therefore, in the same Benjamin Haydon, whom I have just cited as a witness on *my* side, when he furiously denounces the mob of mechanics and day-laborers in London rushing carelessly past the exhibition-room of a great painting by himself, and paying their sixpences by bushels to see Tom Thumb. I have seen Haydon's ignoble and most unjust complaint echoed by multitudes. But this was a mob of pleasure-seekers in Easter-week: poor fellows, with

horny hands, in quest most rightfully of something to refresh and ventilate their bodily systems scorched by the eternal fever of unresting days and nights agitated by care. Anything on earth, anything whatever that would unchain the poor galley-slave's wrists from his everlasting oar! And as to the oil-painting, surely the fields and the Easter flowers would be better than that. Haydon forgot that these poor fellows had never had their natural sensibilities called forth or educated. Amongst them, after all, might lurk a man or two that, *having* such advantages, would have eclipsed even Haydon. And besides, Haydon forgot that *his* exhibition not only cost a shilling, but would not allow of any uproarious jollification such as most of us like (none more than Haydon) after a long confinement to labor.

NOTE 34. Page 105.

It was bad policy in logic to urge at that time the intellectual deficiencies (true or false) of the individual bishops, because this dilemma instantly arose:—These personal deficiencies in the bishops had, or had not, caused the prevailing ecclesiastical grievances. If they had *not*, then it was confessedly impertinence to notice them at all. On the other hand, if they *had*, then in whatsoever proportion they were responsible for the alleged grievances connected with the Church, in that proportion they exonerated the institution of Episcopacy from any share in producing those grievances. Such grievances could not be chargeable upon the personal insufficiency of the individual bishop, and yet at the same time separately chargeable upon the original vice of Episcopacy.

NOTE 35. Page 105.

"*Mary Powel*."—We have seen in the hands of young ladies a romance bearing this title, which (whether meant or not to injure Milton) must do so if applied to the real facts of the case. Novels professedly historical may, in some rare instances, have illuminated and vivified history; much oftener they have perplexed it; and like the famous *Recess* of Miss Sophia Lee, some seventy years back, starting from the basis of a marriage between our English Duke of Norfolk and the Scottish Queen Mary, have utterly falsified both the facts and the traditions of the case. But when applied to the facts

or the traditions of biography, such romantic fictions have a far more calumnious tendency. Every step which is made towards the white-washing of the frivolous and unprincipled Mary Powel is a step towards the impeachment of Milton; and impeachment in a case which, if any within the records of human experience, drew forth and emblazoned Milton's benign spirit of forgiveness, and his magnanimous forbearance when a triumph was offered at once to his partisanship as a politician, and to his insulted rights as a husband. Look back, reader, for a few lines, and fix your attention upon the particular date of Milton's marriage. There is something very significant and important in *that*. It was celebrated, as you see, at Whitsuntide in the year 1645. Now, as Whitsuntide is a movable festival, and dependent upon Easter, it is difficult to guess on what day it would fall in that year. But at the very earliest, Whitsuntide would fall in May, and at the latest, within the month of June. Now in that very June was fought and won by the Parliament forces under Fairfax the decisive battle of Naseby in Northamptonshire. That battle prostrated the party to which the Powels belonged, and raised to the supreme administration of public affairs the party of Milton, and eventually Milton himself. It is true that a lingering resistance to the Parliament was kept up in garrisoned and fortified towns throughout the nine months succeeding to Naseby. But about Lady-day (March 25) of the following year, 1646, the very last act of hostility took place, viz. an extensive cavalry action at Stow-in-the-Wolds, a town of Gloucestershire. Sir Jacob Astley, who commanded for the king, was totally defeated; and the prostration of the Royalists was on that day finally sealed. Now it was some months *after* Naseby that Milton, without reserve, forgave his erring wife, and reinstated her at the head of his family. Some private calamity must have concurred about this time with their political overthrow to overwhelm the Powels. For a season they were ruined. But Milton, forgetting all injuries, received the entire family into his own house. So much for the real historic Mary Powel as compared with the Mary Powel of romance.

NOTE 36. Page 116.

This closing paragraph must (from internal evidence) have been added at the press, I presume in or about the year 1830 or 1831,

when the little sketch was written and probably printed. I have no wish or design to charge the unknown writer with any *intentional* falsification of my very determinate opinions upon the chief biographers of Milton. Bishop Newton and Archdeacon Todd I believe to have been honest men, but brought unavoidably into positions trying to that honesty, and even into inextricable perplexities, by the collision between two most solemn obligations, — viz on the one hand loyalty to the Church of England, and on the other hand loyalty to the mighty poet whose intellectual interests they had spontaneously engaged to sustain, though well knowing that this great man had ranked as the most undistinguishing, fierce, and sometimes even malicious (though still conscientious) assailant that ever tilted against the splendid Anglican Establishment. Dutiful sons (being at the same time benefited servants) of that Establishment, could not effectually mediate between interests so radically opposed. Would it indeed be fair to expect from one who had simply promised us a biographic sketch of an individual, that amongst the mere collateral issues emerging as questions incidentally connected with his theme, he should, for instance, exhaust the great problem of Church Government? — whether best administered by Prelates arrayed in purple and gold, or by obscure and dust-begrimed Elders, or (in defiance of all alien authority) administered *Independently*, — i. e. by each congregation separately for itself, — in which case each congregation is a perfect church hanging by its own hook, and owning no debt, great or small, to any brother congregation, except only that of an exemplary kicking in case such brother should presume to interfere with advice not asked for, or with impertinent suggestion. Newton and Todd extricated themselves with decency from a difficulty which it was impossible to face with absolute success; and the main impression left upon my mind to their disadvantage is, that their materials were chaotic, difficult to organize without the powers of a *demiurgus*, and accordingly not organized. As to Symmons, he was a *Whig*; and his covert purpose was to secure Milton for his own party, before that party was fully secreted by the new tendencies beginning to move amongst the partisanships of the age. Until Dr. Sacheverel came, in Queen Anne's reign, the crystallizations of Whig and Tory were rudimental and incomplete. Symmons, therefore, was under a bias and a morbid kind of deflexion. He was, besides, tumultuary and precipitate in his modes of composition. Finally, as regards Dr. Johnson, and I the

man that would suffer him to escape under the trivial impeachment of "prejudice" ? Dr. Johnson, viewed in relation to Milton, was a malicious, mendacious, and dishonest man. He was met by temptations many and strong to falsehood ; and these temptations he had not the virtue to resist.

NOTE 37. Page 118.

The short paper entitled "Milton" defends that mighty poet upon two separate impeachments—applying themselves (as the reader will please to recollect) not to scattered sentences occurring here and there, but to the whole texture of the "Paradise Lost," and also of the "Paradise Regained." One of these impeachments is—that the poet, incongruously as regarded *taste*, but also injuriously, or almost profanely, as regarded the *pieties* of his theme, introduces the mythologies of Paganism amongst the saintly hierarchies of Revelation ; takes away, in short, the barrier of separation between the impure mobs of the Pantheon and the holy armies of the Christian heavens. The other impeachment applies to Milton's introduction of thoughts, or images, or facts, connected with human art, and suggesting, however evanescently, the presence of man coöperating with man, and the tumult of social multitudes, amidst the primeval silence of Paradise ; or again (as in the "Paradise Regained") amidst the more fearful solitudes of the Arabian wilderness. These charges were first of all urged by Addison, but more than half a century afterwards were indorsed by Dr. Johnson. Addison was the inaugural critic on Milton, coming forward in the early part of the eighteenth century (viz., in the opening mouths of 1712, when as yet Milton had not been dead for so much as forty years) ; but Dr. Johnson, who followed him at a distance of more than sixty years, in the same century, told upon his own generation, and generally upon the English literature, as a critic of more weight and power. It is certain, however, that Addison, by his very deficiencies, by his feebleness of grasp, and his immaturity of development in most walks of critical research, did a service to Milton incomparably greater than all other critics collectively—were it only by its seasonableness ; for it came at the very vestibule of Milton's career as a poet militant amongst his countrymen, who had his popular acceptance yet to win, after the eighteenth century had commenced. Just at this critical moment it was that Addison stepped in to

give the initial bias to the national mind — that bias which intercepted any other.* So far, and perhaps secretly through some

* “*Intercepted any other:*” — What other? the reader will ask. In writing the words, I meant no more than, generally, that a very favorable bias, once established, would limit the openings for alienated or hostile feelings. But of such feelings, on second thoughts, it was obvious that one mode there was specially threatening to Milton’s cordial and household welcome through Great Britain — that mode which secretly at all times, often avowedly, governed Dr. Johnson — viz., the permanent feud with Milton through his political party. But the feud took often a more embittered shape than *that*. Milton’s party was republican. But Milton individually had a worse quarrel to settle than this. All republicans were not regicides; and Milton *was*. Virtually he was regarded by numbers as a regicide, and even under a rancorous aggravation; one who evaded by a verbal refinement the penalties of any statutable offence connected with the king’s death, whilst he exhibited a malice directed against the king’s person more settled and inexorable than any other man throughout the three nations. It is true he had not sat in judgment on the king; he had not signed the warrant for his execution. Not through any scruples, legal or otherwise; but simply as not summoned, by any *official* station, to such a step. He had therefore given no *antecedent* sanction to the king’s judicial treatment in Westminster Hall, or on the scaffold. But, extrajudicially, and *subsequently*, he had gone further in acrimonious invectives against the king, and in sharpening the offences charged upon him, than any man who stood forward prominently at the time. Very few went the length of Milton. Besides his vindication of the king’s punishment, he had deeply and specially offended a great multitude of the royal partisans by his *Eiconoklastes* (image-breaker, or idol-breaker); breaker of what image? Of the *Eicōn Basilike* — *i. e.*, the royal image, which professed to publish the king’s private memoranda and religious reflections upon the chief incidents of the war. Had the king really written or dictated such a work? That question remains wrapped up in mystery to this day. But Mil-

other modes of aid, Addison had proved (as I have called him) the most *seasonable* of allies: but this critic possessed also another commanding gift towards the winning of popularity, whether for himself or for those he patronized — in his style, in the quality of his thoughts, and in his facility of explaining them luminously and with natural grace.

Dr. Johnson, without any distinct acknowledgment, adopted both these charges from Addison. But it is singular that,

ton, aware of the doubts as to the authentic authorship of the little book, had so managed his *Eiconoklast* as to meet either hypothesis — viz., that Charles was, or that he was *not*, the author. The wrath, therefore, of those who worshipped the *Eicon*, as exhibiting the king in a character of saintly and forgiving charity, passed all bounds towards the man who had rudely unmasked the forgery, if it were a forgery, or unmasked the pretender to a charity which he counterfeited — if really the king.

Let me add, at the conclusion of this note, that, considering how many public men of the republican party were at that time assassinated, it remains a great mystery how it happened that Milton died in his bed. This was a great distinction, and (one would hope) conceded to his sublime intellectual claims, though as yet imperfectly established. But, a very few years after his death, a more conspicuous distinction was made in his favor. In the meridian heat of the Revolution, poor old General Ludlow (an honest man, if any there was in those frenzied days) ventured from his Alpine asylum into the publicity of London, but was sternly (some think brutally) ordered off by Parliament, as a mode of advertising their discountenance to regicide. No other questionable act was imputed to the gallant old commander of Cromwell's cavalry. He had coöperated too ardently in promoting the king to martyrdom. At that very time, the Whigs, to their great honor — especially two of their most distinguished men, Somers and Addison — were patronizing by a fervent subscription a splendid edition of Milton, who outran Ludlow as much in his regicidal zeal, as he did in the grandeur of his intellect.

whilst Addison, who does himself great honor by the reverential tenderness which everywhere he shows to Milton, has urged these supposed reproaches with some amplitude of expression and illustration, Dr. Johnson, on the other hand — whose malignity towards Milton is unrelenting, on account of his republican and regicide politics — dismisses both these reproaches with apparent carelessness and haste.* What he says in reference to the grouping of Pagan with Christian imagery or impersonations is simply this: "The mythologic allusions have been justly censured, as not being always used with notice of their vanity." The word *vanity* is here used in an old world Puritanical sense for falsehood or visionariness. In what relations the Pagan gods may be pronounced false, would allow of a far profounder inquiry than is suspected by the wording of the passage quoted. It is, besides, to be observed, that, even if undoubtedly and confessedly false, any creed which has for ages been the object of a cordial assent from an entire race, or from many nations of men, or a belief which (like the belief in ghostly apparitions) rests upon eternal predispositions and natural tendencies in man as a being surrounded by mysteries, is entitled by an irresistible claim to a secondary faith from those even who reject it; and to a respect, such as could not be demanded, for example, on behalf of any capricious fiction like that of the Rosicrucian sylphs and gnomes — invented in a known year, and by an assignable man.

None of us, at this day, who live in continual communication with cities, have any lingering faith in the race of fairies; but yet, as a class of beings consecrated by immemorial traditions, and dedicated to the wild solitudes of nature, and to the shadowy illumination of moonlight, we grant them a toleration of

* An angry notice of the equivocation in "Lycidas" between Christian teachers, figuratively described as shepherds, and the actual shepherds of rural economy, recalls to the reader (as do so many other explosions of the doctor's temper) a veritable Malachi Malagrowther: he calls it *indecent*. But there is no allusion to the faulty intermingling of Pagan with Christian groups.

dim faith and old ancestral love — as, for instance, in the “Midsummer Night’s Dream” — very much as we might suppose granted to some decaying superstition that was protected lovingly by the *children* of man’s race, against the too severe and eiconoklastic wisdom of their parents.

The other charge of obtruding upon the reader an excess of scientific allusions, or of knowledge harshly technical, Dr. Johnson notices even still more slightly in this very negligent sentence: “His unnecessary and ungraceful use of terms of art it is not necessary to mention; because they are easily remarked, and generally censured.” Unaccountably Dr. Johnson forbears to press this accusation against Milton. But generally, even in the forbearances or indulgent praises of Dr. Johnson, we stumble on the hoof of a Malagrowthier; whilst, on the contrary, the direct censures of Addison are so managed as to furnish occasions of oblique homage. There is a remarkable instance of this in the very mechanism and arrangement of his long essay on the “Paradise Lost.” In No. 297 of the “Spectator,” he enters upon that least agreeable section of this essay, which is occupied with passing in review the chief blemishes of this great poem. But Addison shrank with so much honorable pain from this unwelcome office, that he would not undertake it at all, until he had premised a distinct paper (No. 291) one whole week beforehand, for the purpose of propitiating the most idolatrous reader of Milton, by showing that he sought rather to take this office of fault-finding out of hands that might prove less trustworthy, than to court any gratification to his own vanity in a momentary triumph over so great a man. After this conciliatory preparation, no man can complain of Addison’s censures, even when groundless.

With most of these censures, whether well or ill founded, I do not here concern myself. The two with which I *do*, and which seem to me unconsciously directed against modes of sensibility in Milton not fathomed by the critic, nor lying within depths ever likely to be fathomed by *his* plummet, I will report, in Addison’s own words: “Another blemish, that appears in some of his thoughts, is his frequent allusion to heathen fables; which are not certainly of a piece with the divine subject of which he treats. I do not find fault with these allusions, where

the poet himself represents them as fabulous, as he does in some places, but where he mentions them as truths and matters of fact. A third fault in his sentiments is an unnecessary ostentation of learning; which likewise occurs very frequently. It is certain " (indeed!) " that both Homer and Virgil were masters of all the learning of their time: but it shows itself in their works after an indirect and concealed manner." Certainly after a *very* concealed manner; so concealed that no man has been able to find it.

These two charges against Milton being lodged, and entered upon the way-bill of the "Paradise Lost" in its journey down to posterity, Addison makes a final censure on the poem in reference to its diction. Fortunately upon such a question it may be possible hereafter to obtain a revision of this sentence, governed by canons less arbitrary than the feelings, or perhaps the transient caprices, of individuals. For the present I should have nothing to do with this question upon the Miltonic diction, were it not that Addison has thought fit to subdivide this last fault in the "Paradise Lost" (as he considers it) into three separate modes. The first* and the second do not concern my present purpose: but the third *does*. "This lies," says Addison, "in the frequent use of what the learned call technical words, or terms of art." And amongst other illustrations, he says that Milton, "when he is upon building, mentions Doric pillars, pilasters, cornice, frieze, architrave." This in effect is little more than a varied expression for the second of those two objections to the "Paradise Lost" which Addison originated, and Dr. Johnson adopted. To these it is, and these only, that my little paper replies.

* It is a singular weakness in Addison, that, having assigned this first feature of Milton's diction — viz., its supposed dependence on exotic words and on exotic idioms — as the main cause of his failure, he then makes it the main cause of his success, since without such words and idioms Milton could not (he says) have sustained his characteristic sublimity.

NOTE 38. Page 178.

'Arc : '— Modern France, that should know a great deal better than myself, insists that the name is not D'Arc — *i. e.*, of Arc — but *Darc*. Now it happens sometimes, that if a person, whose position guarantees his access to the best information, will content himself with gloomy dogmatism, striking the table with his fist, and saying in a terrific voice, 'It is so; and there's an end of it,' one bows deferentially, and submits. But if, unhappily for himself, won by this docility, he relents too amiably into reasons and arguments, probably one raises an insurrection against him that may never be crushed; for in the fields of logic one can skirmish, perhaps, as well as he. Had he confined himself to dogmatism, he would have entrenched his position in darkness, and have hidden his own vulnerable points. But, coming down to base reasons, he lets in light, and one sees where to plant the blows. Now, the worshipful reason of modern France for disturbing the old received spelling, is — that Jean Hordal, a descendant of *La Pucelle's* brother, spelled the name *Darc*, in 1612. But what of that? It is notorious that what small matter of spelling Providence had thought fit to disburse amongst man in the seventeenth century, was all monopolized by printers; now, M Hordal was *not* a printer.

NOTE 39. Page 179.

'*Those that share thy blood :*' — a collateral relative of Joanna's was subsequently ennobled by the title of *Du Lys*.

NOTE 40. Page 182.

'Only now forthcoming : '— In 1847 *began* the publication (from official records) of Joanna's trial. It was interrupted, I fear, by the convulsions of 1848; and whether even yet finished I do not know.

NOTE 41. Page 184.

'*Jean :*'— M. Michelet asserts, that there was a mystical meaning at that era in calling a child *Jean*; it implied a secret commendation of a child, if not a dedication, to St. John the evangelist, the beloved disciple, the apostle of love and mysterious visions. But, really, as the name was so exceedingly common.

few people will detect a mystery in calling a *boy* by the name of Jack, though it *does* seem mysterious to call a girl Jack. It may be less so in France, where a beautiful practice has always prevailed of giving to a boy his mother's name — preceded and strengthened by a male name, as *Charles Anne, Victor Victoire*. In cases where a mother's memory has been unusually dear to a son, this vocal memento of her, locked into the circle of his own name, gives to it the tenderness of a testamentary relique, or a funeral ring. I presume, therefore, that *La Pucelle* must have borne the baptismal names of Jeanne Jean; the latter with no reference, perhaps, to so sublime a person as St. John, but simply to some relative.

NOTE 42. Page 185.

And reminding one of that inscription, so justly admired by Paul Richter, which a Russian Czarina placed on a guide-post near Moscow — *This is the road that leads to Constantinople*.

NOTE 43. Page 209.

Amongst the many ebullitions of M. Michelet's fury against us poor English, are four which will be likely to amuse the reader; and they are the more conspicuous in collision with the justice which he sometimes does us, and the very indignant admiration which, under some aspects, he grants to us.

1. Our English literature he admires with some gnashing of teeth. He pronounces it 'fine and sombre,' but, I lament to add, 'sceptical, Judaic, Satanic — in a word, Anti-Christian.' That Lord Byron should figure as a member of this diabolical corporation, will not surprise men. It *will* surprise them to hear that Milton is one of its Satanic leaders. Many are the generous and eloquent Frenchmen, besides Chateaubriand, who have, in the course of the last thirty years, nobly suspended their own burning nationality, in order to render a more rapturous homage at the feet of Milton; and some of them have raised Milton almost to a level with angelic natures. Not one of them has thought of looking for him *below* the earth. As to Shakspeare, M. Michelet detects in him a most extraordinary mare's nest. It is this: he does 'not recollect to have seen the name of God' in any part of his works. On reading such words, it is natural to rub one's

eyes, and suspect that all one has ever seen in this world may have been a pure ocular delusion. In particular, I begin myself to suspect, that the word '*la gloire*' never occurs in any Parisian journal. 'The great English nation,' says M. Michelet, 'has one immense profound vice,' to wit, 'pride.' Why, really that may be true; but we have a neighbor not absolutely clear of an 'immense profound vice,' as like ours in color and shape as cherry to cherry. In short, M. Michelet thinks us, by fits and starts, admirable, only that we are detestable; and he would adore some of our authors, were it not that so intensely he could have wished to kick them.

2. M. Michelet thinks to lodge an arrow in our sides by a very odd remark upon Thomas a Kempis: which is, that a man of any conceivable European blood — a Finlander, suppose, or a Zantiote — might have written Tom; only not an Englishman. Whether an Englishman could have forged Tom, must remain a matter of doubt, unless the thing had been tried long ago. That problem was intercepted for ever by Tom's perverseness in choosing to manufacture himself. Yet, since nobody is better aware than M. Michelet that this very point of Kempis *having* manufactured Kempis is furiously and hopelessly litigated, three or four nations claiming to have forged his work for him, the shocking old doubt will raise its snaky head once more — whether this forger, who rests in so much darkness, might not, after all, be of English blood. Tom, it may be feared, is known to modern English literature chiefly by an irreverent mention of his name in a line of Peter Pindar's (Dr. Wolcot) fifty years back, where he is described as

'Kempis Tom,

Who clearly shows the way to Kingdom Come.'

Few in these days can have read him, unless in the Methodist version of John Wesley. Amongst those few, however, happens to be myself; which arose from the accident of having, when a boy of eleven, received a copy of the '*De Imitatione Christi*,' as a bequest from a relation, who died very young; from which cause, and from the external prettiness of the book, being a Glasgow reprint, by the celebrated Foulis, and gayly bound, I was induced to look into it; and finally read it many times over partly out of some sympathy which, even in those days, I had

with its simplicity and devotional fervor; but much more from the savage delight I found in laughing at Tom's Latinity. *That*, I freely grant to M. Michelet, is inimitable. Yet, after all, it is not certain whether the original *was* Latin. But, however *that* may have been, if it is possible that M. Michelet* can be accurate in saying that there are no less than *sixty* French versions (not editions, observe, but separate versions) existing of the 'De Imitatione,' how prodigious must have been the adaptation of the book to the religious heart of the fifteenth century! Excepting the Bible, but excepting *that* only, in Protestant lands, no book known to man has had the same distinction. It is the most marvellous bibliographical fact on record.

3. Our English girls, it seems, are as faulty in one way as we English males in another. None of us men could have written the *Opera Omnia* of Mr. à Kempis; neither could any of our girls have assumed male attire like *La Pucelle*. But why? Because, says Michelet, English girls and German think so much of an indecorum. Well, that is a good fault, generally speaking. But M. Michelet ought to have remembered a fact in the martyrologies which justifies both parties—the French heroine for doing, and the general choir of English girls for *not* doing. A female saint, specially renowned in France, had, for a reason as weighty as Joanna's—viz., expressly to shield her modesty amongst men—worn a male military harness. That reason and

* 'If M. Michelet can be accurate:—' However, on consideration, this statement does not depend on Michelet. The bibliographer Barbier has absolutely *specified* sixty in a separate dissertation, *soixante traductions*, amongst those even that have not escaped the search. The Italian translations are said to be thirty. As to mere *editions*, not counting the early MSS. for half a century before printing was introduced, those in Latin amount to two thousand, and those in French to one thousand. Meantime, it is very clear to me that this astonishing popularity, so entirely unparalleled in literature, could not have existed except in Roman Catholic times, nor subsequently have lingered in any Protestant land. It was the denial of Scripture fountains to thirsty lands which made this slender rill of Scripture truth so passionately welcome.

that example authorized *La Pucelle*; but our English girls, as a body, have seldom any such reason, and certainly no such saintly example, to plead. This excuses *them*. Yet, still, if it is indispensable to the national character that our young women should now and then trespass over the frontier of decorum, it then becomes a patriotic duty in me to assure M. Michelet that we have such ardent females amongst us, and in a long series; some detected in naval hospitals, when too sick to remember their disguise; some on fields of battle; multitudes never detected at all; some only suspected; and others discharged without noise by war offices and other absurd people. In our navy, both royal and commercial, and generally from deep remembrances of slighted love, women have sometimes served in disguise for many years, taking contentedly their daily allowance of burgoo, biscuit, or cannon-balls — anything, in short, digestible or indigestible; that it might please Providence to send. One thing, at least, is to their credit: never any of these poor masks, with their deep silent remembrances, have been detected through murmuring, or what is nautically understood by ‘skulking.’ So, for once, M. Michelet has an *erratum* to enter upon the fly-leaf of his book in presentation copies.

4. But the last of these ebullitions is the most lively. We English, at Orleans, and after Orleans (which is not quite so extraordinary, if all were told), fled before the Maid of Arc. Yes, says M. Michelet, you *did*: deny it, if you can. Deny it, *mon cher*? I don’t mean to deny it. Running away, in many cases, is a thing so excellent, that no philosopher would, at times, condescend to adopt any other step. All of us nations in Europe, without one exception, have shown our philosophy in that way at times. Even people, ‘*qui ne se rendent pas*,’ have deigned both to run and to shout, ‘*Sauve qui peut!*’ at odd times of sunset; though, for my part, I have no pleasure in recalling unpleasant remembrances to brave men; and yet, really, being so philosophic, they ought *not* to be unpleasant. But the amusing feature in M. Michelet’s reproach is the way in which he *improves* and varies against us the charge of running, as if he were singing a catch. Listen to him. They ‘*showed their backs*,’ did these English. (Hip, hip, hurrah! three times three!) ‘*Behind good walls, they let themselves be taken.*’ (Hip hip! nine times

nine!) They '*ran as fast as their legs could carry them.*' (Hurrah! twenty-seven times twenty-seven!) They '*ran before a girl;*' they did. (Hurrah! eighty-one times eighty-one!) This reminds one of criminal indictments on the old model in English courts, where (for fear the prisoner should escape) the crown lawyer varied the charge perhaps through forty counts. The law laid its guns so as to rake the accused at every possible angle. Whilst the indictment was reading, he seemed a monster of crime in his own eyes; and yet, after all, the poor fellow had but committed one offence, and not always *that*. N. B. — Not having the French original at hand, I make my quotations from a friend's copy of Mr. Walter Kelly's translation, which seems to me faithful, spirited, and idiomatically English — liable, in fact, only to the single reproach of occasional provincialisms.

NOTE 44. Page 218.

"*Nube*:" — One must wink at blunders where royalties are concerned; else, between you and me, reader, *nube* is not the right word, unless when the Austrian throne-winner happened to be a princess. *Nube* could not be applied to a man, as an old dusty pentameter will assist the reader in remembering:

"*Uxorem duco; nubit at illa mihi.*"

NOTE 45. Page 219.

"*A Howard by birth*:" — She was a very good and kind-hearted woman; yet still, as a daughter of the Howards (the great fendal house of Suffolk), she regarded any possible heraldic pretensions of an obscure baronet's family as visible only through powerful microscopes.

NOTE 46. Page 224.

"*The only dreadful struggle*:" — This was written thirteen years ago, when the Sikh empire of Lahore was only beginning to be dangerous; and the *Lion* of Lahore, Runjeet Sing (the Romulus of the Sikhs), was but dimly appreciated by our own officers, when presented to him on their march to and from Afghanistan. *Sing* means *lion*.

NOTE 47. Page 225.

Routously : — This is not altogether lawyers' surplusage : for let the hot blooded reader understand, that to be *routous* is nothing like so criminal in law as to be *riotous*. I never go beyond the *routous* point.

NOTE 48. Page 232.

'*Scriptural*,' we call it, because this element of thought, so indispensable to a profound philosophy of morals, is not simply *more* used in Scripture than elsewhere, but is so exclusively significant or intelligible amidst the correlative ideas of Scripture, as to be absolutely insusceptible of translation into classical Greek or classical Latin. It is disgraceful that more reflection has not been directed to the vast causes and consequences of so pregnant a truth.

NOTE 49. Page 244.

'*Poor S. T. C.*' — The affecting expression by which Coleridge indicates himself in the few lines written during his last illness for an inscription upon his grave; lines ill constructed in point of diction and compression, but otherwise speaking from the depths of his heart.

NOTE 50. Page 263.

It is right to remind the reader of this, for a reason applying forcibly to the present moment. Michelet has taxed Englishmen with yielding to national animosities in the case of Joan, having no plea whatever for that insinuation but the single one drawn from Shakspeare's Henry VI. To this the answer is, first, that Shakspeare's share in that trilogy is not nicely ascertained. Secondly, that M. Michelet forgot (or, which is far worse, *not* forgetting it, he dissembled) the fact, that in undertaking a series of dramas upon the basis avowedly of national chronicles, and for the very purpose of profiting by old traditionary recollections connected with ancestral glories, it was mere lunacy to recast the circumstances at the bidding of antiquarian research, so as entirely to disturb these glories. Besides that, to Shakspeare's age no such spirit of research had blossomed. Writing for the

stage, a man would have risked lapidation by uttering a whisper in that direction. And, even if not, what sense could there have been in openly running counter to the very motive that had originally prompted that particular class of chronicle plays? Thirdly, if one Englishman had, in a memorable situation, adopted the popular view of Joan's conduct, (*popular* as much in France as in England;) on the other hand, fifty years before M. Michelet was writing this flagrant injustice, another Englishman (*viz.*, Southey) had, in an epic poem, reversed this misjudgment, and invested the shepherd girl with a glory nowhere else accorded to her, unless indeed by Schiller. Fourthly, we are not entitled to view as an *attack* upon Joanna, what, in the worst construction, is but an unexamining adoption of the contemporary historical accounts. A poet or a dramatist is not responsible for the accuracy of chronicles. But what *is* an attack upon Joan, being briefly the foulest and obscenest attempt ever made to stifle the grandeur of a great human struggle, *viz.*, the French burlesque poem of *La Pucelle* — what memorable man was it that wrote *that*? Was he a Frenchman, or was he not? That M. Michelet should *pretend* to have forgotten this vilest of pasquinades, is more shocking to the general sense of justice than any special untruth as to Shakspeare *can* be to the particular nationality of an Englishman.

NOTE 51. Page 274.

This was written ten years ago; and doubtless I had ground sufficient for what I then said. At present, however, I have entirely forgotten the particular case alluded to, unless (as I rather believe) it was a case of infant funerals with a view to the insurance-money.

NOTE 52. Page 279.

The story which furnishes a basis to the fine ballad in Percy's *Reliques*, and to the Canterbury Tale of Chaucer's *Lady Abbess*.

NOTE 53. Page 291.

“*Transact* :” — this word, used in this Roman sense, illustrates the particular mode of Milton's liberties with the English

language: liberties which have never yet been properly examined, collated, numbered, or appreciated. In the Roman law, *transigere* expressed the case, where each of two conflicting parties conceded something of what originally he had claimed as the rigor of his right; and *transactio* was the technical name for a legal compromise. Milton has here introduced no new word into the English language, but has given a new and more learned sense to an old one. Sometimes, it is true, as in the word *sensuous*, he introduces a pure coinage of his own, and a very useful coinage; but generally to reëndow an old foundation is the extent of his innovations. M. de Tocqueville is therefore likely to be found wrong in saying, that "Milton alone introduced more than six hundred words into the English language, almost all derived from the Latin, the Greek, or the Hebrew." The passage occurs in the 16th chapter of his "Democracy in America," Part II., where M. de Tocqueville is discussing the separate agencies through which democratic life on the one hand, or aristocratic on the other, affects the changes of language. His English translator, Mr. H. Reeve, an able and philosophic annotator, justly views this bold assertion as "startling and probably erroneous."

NOTE 54. Page 292.

Since the boyish period in which these redressing corrections occurred to me, I have seen some reason (upon considering the oriental practice of placing live coals in a pan upon the head, and its meaning as still in use amongst the Turks) to alter the whole interpretation of the passage. It would too much interrupt the tenor of the subject to explain this at length; but, if right, it would equally harmonize with the spirit of Christian morals.

NOTE 55. Page 302.

"*Family*:" *i. e.*, the *gens* in the Roman sense, or collective house. Shelley's own immediate branch of the house did not, in a legal sense, represent the family of Penshurst, because the *rights* of the lineal descent had settled upon another branch. But *his* branch had a collateral participation in the glory of the Sidney name, and might, by accidents possible enough, have come to be its sole representative.

NOTE 56. Page 305.

“*Of Custom* :” — This alludes to a theory of Shelley's, on the subject of marriage as a vicious institution, and an attempt to realize his theory by way of public example ; which attempt there is no use in noticing more particularly, as it was subsequently abandoned. Originally he had derived his theory from the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of his second wife, whose birth in fact had cost that mother her life. But by the year 1812, (the year following his first marriage), he had so fortified, from other quarters, his previous opinions upon the wickedness of all nuptial ties consecrated by law or by the church, that he apologized to his friends for having submitted to the marriage ceremony as for an offence ; but an offence, he pleaded, rendered necessary by the vicious constitution of society, for the comfort of his female partner.

NOTE 57. Page 307.

“*Two counties* :” — the frontier line between Westmoreland and Cumberland, traverses obliquely the Lake of Ulleswater, so that the banks on both sides lie partly in both counties.

NOTE 58. Page 309.

“*At that time* !” — the reader will say, who happens to be aware of the mighty barriers which engirdle Grasmere, Fairfield, Arthur's Chair, Seat Sandal, Steil Fell, &c. (the lowest above two thousand, the highest above *three* thousand feet high), — “*what then ? do the mountains change, and the mountain tarns ?*” Perhaps not ; but, if they do not change in substance or in form, they “*change countenance*” when they are disfigured from below. One cotton-mill, planted by the side of a torrent, disenchant's the scene, and banishes the ideal beauty even in the case where it leaves the physical beauty untouched : a truth which, many years ago, I saw illustrated in the little hamlet of Church Coniston. But is there any cotton-mill in Grasmere ? Not that I have heard : but if no water has been filched away from Grasmere, there is one water too much which has crept lately into that loveliest of mountain chambers ; and *that* is the “*water-cure*,” which has built unto

itself a sort of residence in that vale ; whether a rustic nest, or a lordly palace, I do not know. Meantime, in honesty it must be owned, that many years ago the vale was half ruined by an insane substruction carried along the eastern margin of the lake as a basis for a mail-coach road. This infernal mass of solid masonry swept away the loveliest of sylvan recesses, and the most absolutely charmed against intrusive foot or angry echoes. It did worse ; it swept away the stateliest of Flora's daughters, and swept away, at the same time, the birth-place of a well-known verse, describing that stately plant, which is perhaps (as a separate line) the most exquisite that the poetry of earth can show. The plant was the *Osmunda regalis* :

“ Plant lovelier in its own recess
Than Grecian Naiad seen at earliest dawn
Tending her fount, or lady of the lake
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.”

It is this last line and a half which some have held to ascend in beauty as much beyond any single line known to literature, as the *Osmunda* ascends in luxury of splendor above other ferns. I have restored the original word *lake*, which the poet himself under an erroneous impression had dismissed for *mere*. But the line rests no longer on an earthly reality — the recess, which suggested it, is gone : the *Osmunda* has fled ; and a vile causeway, such as Sin and Death build in Milton over Chaos, fastening it with “asphaltic slime” and “pins of adamant,” having long displaced the loveliest chapel (as I may call it) in the whole cathedral of Grasmere, I have since considered Grasmere itself a ruin of its former self.

NOTE 59. Page 314.

“*Alastor*,” *i. e.*, Shelley. Mr. Gilfillan names him thus from the designation, self-assumed by Shelley, in one of the least intelligible amongst his poems.

NOTE 60. Page 314.

The immediate cause of the catastrophe was supposed to be this — Shelley's boat had reached a distance of four miles from the

shore, when the storm suddenly arose, and the wind suddenly shifted: "from excessive smoothness," says Mr. Trelawney, all at once the sea was "foaming, breaking, and getting up into a very heavy swell." After one hour the swell went down; and towards evening it was almost a calm. The circumstances were all adverse: the gale, the current setting into the gulf, the instantaneous change of wind, acting upon an undecked boat, having all the sheets fast, overladen, and no expert hands on board but one, made the foundering as sudden as it was inevitable. The boat is supposed to have filled to leeward, and (carrying two tons of ballast) to have gone down like a shot. A book found in the pocket of Shelley, and the unaltered state of the dress on all the corpses when washed on shore, sufficiently indicated that not a moment's preparation for meeting the danger had been possible.

NOTE 61. Page 315.

See "The Seven against Thebes" of Æschylus.

NOTE 62. Page 317.

"*The eternal child*:" — this beautiful expression, so true in its application to Shelley, I borrow from Mr. Gilfillan; and I am tempted to add the rest of his eloquent parallel between Shelley and Lord Byron, so far as it relates to their external appearance: — "In the forehead and head of Byron there is more massive power and breadth: Shelley's has a smooth, arched, spiritual expression; wrinkle there seems none on his brow; it is as if perpetual youth had there dropped its freshness. Byron's eye seems the focus of pride and lust; Shelley's is mild, pensive, fixed on you, but seeing you through the mist of his own idealism. Defiance curls on Byron's nostril, and sensuality steepens his full large lips; the lower features of Shelley's face are frail, feminine, flexible. Byron's head is turned upwards; as if, having risen proudly above his cotemporaries, he were daring to claim kindred, or to demand a contest, with a superior order of beings: Shelley's is half bent, in reverence and humility, before some vast vision seen by his own eye alone. Misery erect, and striving to cover its retreat under an aspect of contemptuous fury, is the permanent and

pervading expression of Byron's countenance : — sorrow, softened and shaded away by hope and habit, lies like a 'holier day' of still moonshine upon that of Shelley. In the portrait of Byron, taken at the age of nineteen, you see the unnatural age of premature passion ; his hair is young, his dress is youthful ; but his face is old : — in Shelley you see the eternal child, none the less that his hair is gray, and that 'sorrow seems half his immortality' "

NOTE 63. Page 321.

There is one peculiarity about Lucretius which, even in the absence of all anecdotes to that effect, would have led an observing reader to suspect some unsoundness in his brain. It is this, and it lies in his manner. In all poetic enthusiasm, however grand and sweeping may be its compass, so long as it is healthy and natural, there is a principle of self-restoration in the opposite direction : there is a counter state of repose, a compensatory state, as in the tides of the sea, which tends continually to reëstablish the equipoise. The lull is no less intense than the fury of commotion. But in Lucretius there is no lull. Nor would there *seem* to be any, were it not for two accidents : 1st, the occasional pause in his raving tone enforced by the interruption of an episode 2dly, the restraints (or at least the suspensions) imposed upon him by the difficulties of *argument conducted in verse*. To dispute metrically, is as embarrassing as to run or dance when knee-deep in sand. Else, and apart from these counteractions, the motion of the style is not only stormy, but self-kindling and continually accelerated.

NOTE 64. Page 322.

"*Habit of body*:" but much more from mismanagement of his body. Dr. Johnson tampered with medical studies, and fancied himself learned enough to prescribe for his female correspondents. The affectionateness with which he sometimes did this is interesting ; but his ignorance of the subject is not the less apparent. In his own case he had the merit of one heroic self-conquest ; he weaned himself from wine, having once become convinced that it was injurious. But he never brought himself to take regular exercise. He ate too much at all times of his life. And in another

point, he betrayed a thoughtlessness, which (though really common as laughter) is yet extravagantly childish. Everybody knows that Dr. Johnson was all his life reproaching himself with lying too long in bed. Always he was sinning (for he thought it a sin); always he was repenting; always he was vainly endeavoring to reform. But why vainly? Cannot a resolute man in six weeks bring himself to rise at *any* hour of the twenty-four? Certainly he can; but not without appropriate means. Now the Doctor rose about eleven, A. M. This, he fancied, was shocking; he was determined to rise at eight, or at seven. Very well; why not? But will it be credited that the one sole change occurring to the Doctor's mind, was to take a flying leap backwards from eleven to eight, without any corresponding leap at the other terminus of his sleep? To rise at eight instead of eleven, presupposes that a man goes off to bed at twelve instead of three. Yet this recondite truth never to his dying day dawned on Dr. Johnson's mind. The conscientious man continued to offend; continued to repent; continued to pave a disagreeable place with good intentions, and daily resolutions of amendment; but at length died full of years, without having once seen the sun rise, except in some Homeric description, written (as Mr. Fynes Clifton makes it probable) thirty centuries before. The fact of the sun's rising at all, the Doctor adopted as a point of faith, and by no means of personal knowledge, from an insinuation to that effect in the most ancient of Greek books.

NOTE 65. Page 324.

One of these examples is equivocal in a way that Mr. Gilfillan is apparently not aware of. He cites Tickell, "whose very name" (he says) "savors of laughter," as being, "in fact, a very happy fellow." In the first place, Tickell would have been likely to "square" at Mr. Gilfillan for that liberty taken with his name; or might even, in Falstaff's language, have tried to "tickle his catastrophe." It is a ticklish thing to lark with honest men's names. But, secondly, *which* Tickell? For there are two at the least in the field of English literature; and if one of them was "very happy," the chances are, according to D. Bernoulli and De Moivre, that the other was particularly miserable. The first Tickell, who

may be described as Addison's Tickell, never tickled anything, that I know of, except Addison's vanity. But Tickell the second, who came into working order about fifty years later, was really a very pleasant fellow. In the time of Burke he diverted the whole nation by his poem of "*Anticipation*," in which he anticipated and dramatically rehearsed the course of a whole parliamentary debate (on the king's speech), which did not take place till a week or two afterwards. Such a mimicry was easy enough; but *that* did not prevent its fidelity and characteristic truth from delighting the political world.

NOTE 66. Page 326.

[*Addison married the Countess of Warwick.*] There is a well-known old Irish ballad repeatedly cited by Maria Edgeworth, which opens thus:—

"There was a young man in Ballinacrasay
That took him a wife to make him unassy."

Such to the letter was the life-catastrophe of Addison.

NOTE 67. Page 327.

For the same reason, I refrain from noticing the pretensions of Savage. Mr. Gilfillan gives us to understand, that not from want of room, but of time, he does not (which else he *could*) prove him to be the man he pretended to be. For my own part, I believe Savage to have been the vilest of swindlers; and in these days, under the surveillance of an active police, he would have lost the chance which he earned of being hanged,* by having long previously been transported to the plantations. How can Mr. Gilfil-

* Savage had actually received sentence of death for murder perpetrated in a tavern brawl. The royal clemency interposed most critically to save him from the scaffold; but under an impression utterly without foundation as to his maternal persecutions. Not he by his mother, but his pretended mother by him, was systematically persecuted for years, as a means of extorting money. Suppose his pretensions true, would a person of any manliness have sought to win his daily bread from the terrors of her whom he claimed as his mother?

an allow himself, in a case of this nature, to speak of "universal impression" (if it had really existed) as any separate ground of credibility for Savage's tale? When the public have no access at all to sound means of judging, what matters it in which direction their "impression" lies, or how many thousands swell the belief, for which not one of all these thousands has anything like a reason to offer?

NOTE 68. Page 329.

"*Fiery particle:*" — Lord Byron is loosely translating the expression of Horace — *divinæ particula auræ*.

NOTE 69. Page 331.

"*A folly.*" We English limit the application of this term to buildings; but the idea might as fitly be illustrated in other objects. For instance, the famous galley presented to one of the Ptolemies, which offered the luxurious accommodations of capital cities, but required a little army of four thousand men to row it, whilst its draught of water was too great to allow of its often approaching the shore; this was "a folly" in our English sense. So again was the Macedonian phalanx. The Roman legion could form upon *any* ground; it was a true working tool. But the phalanx was too fine and showy for use. It required for its manœuvring a sort of opera stage, or a select bowling-green, such as few fields of battle offered.

NOTE 70. Page 331.

I had written the "Empress Catherine;" but, on second thoughts, it occurred to me that the "mighty freak" was, in fact, due to the Empress Elizabeth. There is, however, a freak connected with ice, not quite so "mighty," but quite as autocratic, and even more feminine in its caprice, which belongs exclusively to the Empress Catherine. A lady had engaged the affections of some young nobleman, who was regarded favorably by the imperial eye. No pretext offered itself for interdicting the marriage, but, by way of freezing it a little at the outset, the Czarina coupled with her permission this condition — that the wedding night should

be passed by the young couple on a mattress of *her* gift. The mattress turned out to be a block of ice, elegantly cut, by the court upholsterer, into the likeness of a well-stuffed Parisian mattress. One pities the poor bride, whilst it is difficult to avoid laughing in the midst of one's sympathy. But it is to be hoped that no *ukase* was issued against spreading seven Turkey carpets, by way of under-blankets, over this amiable nuptial present. Amongst others who have noticed the story, is Captain Colville Frankland, of the navy.

NOTE 71. Page 334.

Bergmann, the German traveller, in his account of his long rambles and residence amongst the Kalmucks, makes us acquainted with the delirious vanity which possesses these demi-savages. Their notion is, that excellence of every kind, perfection in the least things as in the greatest, is briefly expressed by calling it *Kalmuckish*. Accordingly, their hideous language, and their vast national poem (doubtless equally hideous), they hold to be the immediate gifts of inspiration : and for this I honor them, as each generation learns both from the lips of their mothers. This great poem, by the way, measures (if I remember) seventeen English miles in length ; but the most learned man amongst them, in fact a monster of erudition, never read further than the eighth milestone. What he could repeat by heart was little more than a mile and a half ; and, indeed, *that* was found too much for the choleric part of his audience. Even the Kalmuck face, which to us foolish Europeans looks so unnecessarily flat and ogre-like, these honest Tartars have ascertained to be the pure classical model of human beauty, — which, in fact, it *is*, upon the principle of those people who hold that the chief use of a face is — to frighten one's enemy.

NOTE 72. Page 385.

“*Λαμπαδοφοροι :*” — Lamp or torch bearers, the several parties to an obscure Grecian game. The essential point known to us moderns is, that, in running, they passed on to each other a lighted torch, under what conditions, beyond that of keeping the torch burning, is very imperfectly explained. But already this

feature of the game, without further details, qualifies the partakers in it to represent symbolically those who, from generation to generation, pass onwards the traditions of gathering knowledge.

NOTE 73. Page 392.

I use the word *prophet* in the ordinary sense. Yet in strictness this is not the primary sense. Primarily it means and Scripturally it means — *interpreter of the divine purposes and thoughts*. If those purposes and thoughts should happen to lurk in mysterious doctrines of religion, then the prophet is simply an *exegetes*, or expounder. But, it is true, if they lurk in the dark mazes of time and futurity unrolling itself from the central present, then the prophet means a seer or reader of the future, in our ordinary modern sense. But this modern sense is neither the Mahometan sense, nor that which prevails in the New Testament. Mahomet is the prophet of God — not in the sense of predictor from afar, but as the organ of communication between God and man, or revealer of the divine will. In St. Paul, again, gifts of prophecy mean uniformly any extraordinary qualifications for unfolding the meaning of Scripture doctrines, or introducing light and coherency amongst their elements, and perhaps *never* the qualifications for inspired fore-sight. In the true sense of the word, therefore, Newton was the prophet of Kepler, *i. e.*, the exegetic commentator on Kepler, not Kepler of Newton. But the best policy in this world is — to think with the wise, and (generally speaking) to talk with the vulgar.

NOTE 74. Page 394.

“*Park* :” — It is painful, but at the same time it is affecting, for the multitudes who respect the memory of Park, to know, that this brave man’s ruin was accomplished through a weak place in his own heart. Park, upon his second expedition, was placed in a most trying condition. We all know the fable of the traveller that resisted Boreas and his storms — his hail, his sleet, and his blustering blasts ; *there* the traveller was strong ; but he could not resist Phœbus, could not resist his flattering gales and his luxurious wooings. He yielded to the fascinations of love, what he had refused to the defiance of malice. Such temptations had Park to face when, for the second time, he

reached the coast of Africa. Had the world frowned upon him, as once upon the same coast it *did*, then he would have found a nobility in his own desolation. *That* he could have faced; and, without false bias, could have chosen what was best on the whole. But it happened that the African Association of London had shown him great confidence and great liberality. His sensitive generosity could not support the painful thought — that, by delaying his expedition, he might seem to be abusing their kindness. He precipitated his motions, therefore, by one entire half year. That original error threw him upon the wrong season, and drew after it the final error which led to the conflict in which he perished.

NOTE 75. Page 395.

Gentlemen-commoners: — The name is derived from our Oxford word *commons*, which in ordinary parlance means whatever is furnished at the public dinner-table, or (in those colleges which still retain public suppers) at the supper-table. Reflecting at this moment upon the word, we should presume it to be the first two syllables colloquially corrupted of the Latin *commensalia*. A commoner is one who is a *fellow-table*r, who eats his *commensalia* in company with other undergraduate students. A gentleman-commoner is one who by right may claim to be a fellow-tableer with the governing part of the college; although in large colleges, where this order is extensive enough to justify such an arrangement, the gentle-commoners dine at a separate table. In Cambridge they bear the name of *fellow-commoners*.

NOTE 76. Page 397.

Miss Knight: — This young lady had offered her homage to Dr. Johnson by extending his “*Rasselas*” into a sequel entitled “*Dinarbas*.”

NOTE 77. Page 444.

The two authorities for all authentic information about J. Henderson are, — 1. The funeral sermon of Mr. Agutter; 2. A Memoir of him by Mr. Cottle of Bristol, inserted in Mr. Cottle's Poems. We know not whether we learned the anecdote from these sources, or in conversation with Mr. Cottle many years ago. Meantime, to check any wandering conceit that Hender

son may be a mere local notoriety, let me inform the reader that he is the man whom Samuel Johnson and Burke went to visit at Bristol upon the mere fame of his attainments, and then in Scriptural language pronounced that "*the half had not been told them.*"

NOTE 78. Page 444.

One objection only we have heard to our last article from any person *not* a partisan of Goethe: being plausible, and coming from a man of talents, we reply to it. "Surely," says he, "it cannot be any fault of Goethe's that he is *old.*" Certainly not: no fault at all, but a circumstance of monstrous aggravation connected with one particular fault of "*Wilhelm Meister.*"

NOTE 79. Page 447.

"*Young Corinthian laity:*" — Milton, "Apology for Smectymnuus."

NOTE 80. Page 453.

["*And yet it shrank a little:*" — The reference seems a divided one. The ballad of "The Boy and the Mantle," in "Percy's Reliques" seems to have been in De Quincey's mind as regards the incident, while Spencers's adaptation in Florimel's girdle has misled him into the use of *girdle* rather than *mantle.*]

NOTE 81. Page 454.

See the admirable description in Mr. Lamb's "Dramatic Specimens." The situation is this: a number of people carousing in an upper room of a tavern become so thoroughly drunk as to fancy themselves in a ship far out at sea; and their own unsteady footing in 'walking the deck,' they conclude to be the natural effect from the tumbling billows of the angry ocean, which in fact is gathering rapidly into every sign of the coming storm. One man in his anxiety therefore climbs a bed-post, which he takes for the mast-head, and reports the most awful appearances ahead. By his advice they fall to lightening ship: out of the windows they throw overboard beds, tables, chairs, the good landlady's crockery, bottles, glasses, &c., working in agonies of haste for dear life. By this time the uproar and hurly-burly has reached the ears of the police, who come in a body up-stairs:

but the drunkards, conceiving them to be sea-gods—Neptune, Triton, &c., begin to worship them. What accounts for this intrusion of *Pagan* adorations—is this: viz., that originally the admirable scene was derived from a Greek comic sketch, though transplanted into the English drama with so much of life-like effect, as really to seem a native English growth.

NOTE 82. Page 456.

It is afterwards related to her; and the passage, which describes the effect upon her mind (p. 317, vol. i.), is about the most infamous in any book.

NOTE 83. Page 459.

By which title, for no reason upon earth (since she neither amputates one of her breasts, nor in any other point affects the Amazon) is constantly designated a fair incognita in a riding-habit, whom Wilhelm had once seen, and having seen had of course fallen in love with, not being at the time in love with more than three other persons.

NOTE 84. Page 459.

"*Just*," in this use of it, is a Hyperboreanism and still intelligible in some provinces.

NOTE 85. Page 460.

It is true that in the end the person in question turns out *not* to be her mother: but as yet Theresa has no suspicion of such a discovery.

NOTE 86. Page 466.

"*Our friend*" is the general designation, throughout the novel, of the hero.

NOTE 87. Page 468.

"*Barley-break*:" see any poet of 1600–1640; Sir J. Suckling for instance.

NOTE 88. Page 473.

"*Vanished*;" or should we read, perhaps, varnished?

NOTE 89. Page 475.

His name is *not* Mignonette, Mr. Goethe will say. No: in fact he has no name: but he is father to Mignon; and therefore in default of a better name we cannot see why we should not be at liberty to call him Mignonette.

“ Si tibi Mistyllus coquus . . . vocatur,
Dicetur quare non *T* ara t' *alla* mihi ? ”

Not having a Martial at hand, we must leave a little gap in the first line to be filled up by those who have: *Æmiliane* is perhaps the word. The names in “*Wilhelm Meister*” are of themselves worthy of notice, as furnishing a sufficient evidence of Goethe's capriciousness and fantastic search after oddity. Most of the Germans, for no possible reason, have Italian names ending in *o* and *a* (the Italians on the other hand have not); of one Italian name (*Jarvis*) Goethe himself says that “nobody knows what to make of it.” Our own theory is that it comes by syncope from *Jargono*.

NOTE 90. Page 476.

Matthews, a man of extraordinary intellectual promise, and a special friend of Lord Byron's. He defrauded all the expectations of his friends by dying prematurely. The reader will do well, however, to look into his “*Diary*.”

NOTE 91. Page 478.

Mignonette has taken so long in killing that we have no room for Mignon in the gallery; but as she is easily detached from the novel, we hope to present her on some other opportunity as a cabinet picture.

NOTE 92. Page 482.

This young lady we overlooked in the general muster: her name is Lydia: and her little history is that she had first of all set her cap at Lothario and succeeded in bringing him to her feet; secondly, had been pushed aside to make room for Theresa; and, thirdly, had forced herself into Lothario's house and bedroom

under the pretext of nursing him when wounded ; but fourthly had been fairly ejected from both house and bedroom by a stratagem in which "our friend" in the character of toad-eater takes a most ungentlemanly part.

NOTE 93. Page 511.

The *Critik der Reinen Vernunft* was published about five years before the French Revolution, but lay unnoticed in the publisher's warehouse for four or five years.

NOTE 94. Page 515.

'*Interpenetration*:' — this word is from the mint of Mr. Coleridge: and, as it seems to me a very 'laudable' word (as surgeons say of *pus*) I mean to patronize it; and beg to recommend it to my friends and the public in general. By the way, the public, of whose stupidity I have often reason to complain, does not seem to understand it: — the prefix *inter* has the force of the French *entre*, in such words as *s'entrelacer*: *reciprocal* penetration is the meaning: as if a black color should enter a crimson one, yet not keep itself distinct; but, being in turn pervaded by the crimson, each should diffuse itself through the other.

NOTE 95. Page 517.

'And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.'

So that, according to the Doctor, Shakspeare performed a match against Time; and, being backed by Nature, it seems he won it.

NOTE 96. Page 517.

Of which the most tremendous case I have met with was this; and, as I greatly desire to believe so good a story, I should be more easy in mind if I knew that anybody else had ever believed it. In the year 1818, an Irishman, and a great lover of whiskey, persisted obstinately, though often warned of his error, in attempting to blow out a candle: the candle, however, blew out the Irishman: and the following result was sworn to before the coroner. The Irishman shot off like a Congreve rocket, passed with the velocity of a twenty-four pounder through I know not

how many stories, ascended to the 'highest heaven of invention,' viz. — to the garrets, where slept a tailor and his wife. Feather beds, which stop cannon-balls, gave way before the Irishman's skull: he passed like a gimblet through two mattresses, a feather bed, &c., and stood grinning at the tailor and his wife, without his legs, however, which he had left behind him in the second floor.

NOTE 97. Page 520.

'*Proceeded* to roast him, — yes: but did he roast him?' Really I can't say. Some people like their mutton underdone; and Lord —— might like his *man* underdone. All I know of the sequel is, that the sun expressed no horror at this Thyestean cookery, which might be because he had set two hours before: but the Sun newspaper *did*, when it rose some nights after (as it always does) at six o'clock in the evening.

NOTE 98. Page 521.

Inquiry, &c. p 279.

NOTE 99. Page 522

Goethe has lately (*Morphologie*, p. 108, *Zweyter heft*) resorted to his conversations with Schiller, in a way which places himself in rather an unfavorable contrast.

NOTE 100. Page 535.

On this antique mode of symbolizing the mysterious Nature which is at the heart of all things and connects all things into one whole, possibly the reader may feel not unwilling to concur with Kant's remark at p. 197, of his *Critik der Urtheilskraft*: 'Perhaps in all human composition there is no passage of greater sublimity, nor amongst all sublime thoughts any which has been more sublimely expressed, than that which occurs in the inscription upon the temple of Isis (the Great Mother — Nature): *I am whatsoever is — whatsoever has been — whatsoever shall be: and the veil which is over my countenance, no mortal hand has ever raised.*'

NOTE 101. Page 537.

Some class of ephemeral insects are born about five o'clock in the afternoon, and die before midnight — supposing them to live to old age.

NOTE 102. Page 537.

If the dew is evaporated immediately upon the sun-rising, rain and storm follow in the afternoon ; but, if it stays and glitters for a long time after sunrise, the day continues fair.

NOTE 103. Page 539.

' *Market-lookers* ' is a provincial term (I know not whether used in London) for the public officers who examine the quality of the provisions exposed for sale. By *this town* I suppose John Paul to mean Bayreuth — the place of his residence.

NOTE 104. Page 551.

From this it should seem that Costard was a duck doctor : we remember also a "History of Astronomy" by one Costard. These facts we mention merely as hints for inquiry, to the editors of the next Variorum Shakspeare.

NOTE 105. Page 552.

Further on in the volume we have five more pages (pp. 307-312) on the same noble author ; to say nothing of three beginning at p. 278, which are imagined by Miss Hawkins to concern Horace Walpole, but which in fact relate, by every word and syllable, to his brother Sir Edward Walpole, and to him only. In both the first and last introduction of Lord Orford, Miss Hawkins contrives to be most amusingly and perversely wrong in all her criticisms, both as relates to his works and to his place in the public esteem. 1. Lord Orford's tragedy ("The Mysterious Mother") is not the "noxious performance" which she supposes nor is it a work of any genius. It has no merits which can ever bring it upon the stage ; nor, if it *were* brought upon the stage, would it therefore be "time for the virtuous to fly their country and leave it a prey to wild beasts." In his *choice* of a subject

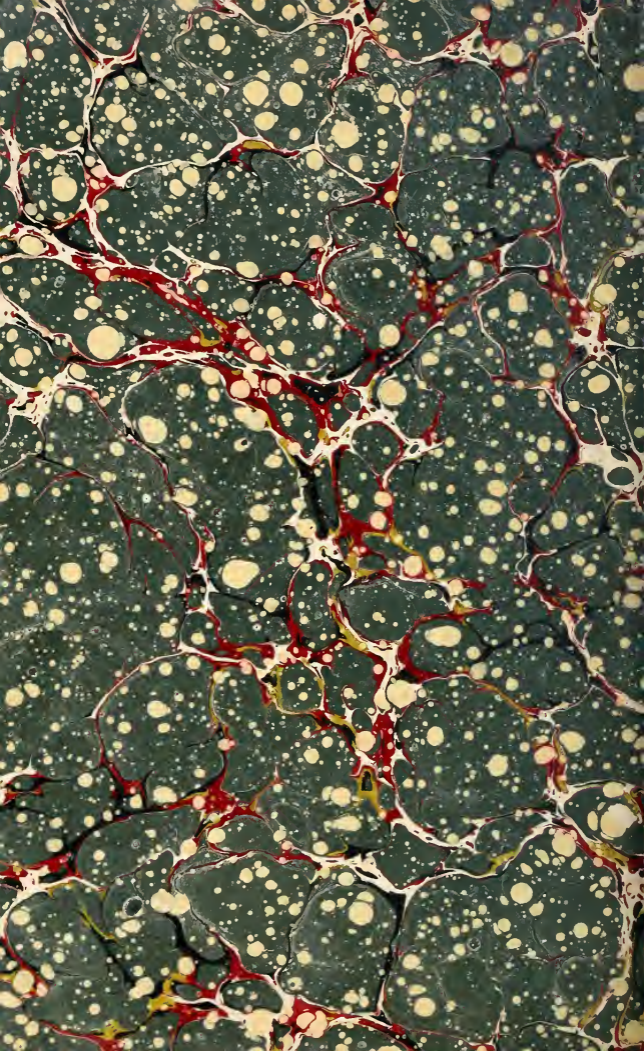
Lord Orford showed a singular defect of judgment ; in his *treatment* of it, he is not intentionally immoral. With depraved taste and feeble sensibilities he is chargeable ; but not, as Miss Hawkins asserts, with an act of "enormous indecency." 2. The "Castle of Otranto" is not "a new creation in literature," as she seems to concede (p. 309) : on the contrary, it is a most weak and extravagant fiction, in which the coarse, the clumsy, the palpable, and the material, are substituted for the aërial, the spiritual, and the shadowy ; the supernatural agency being, as Mr Hazlitt has most happily expressed it ("Lectures on the Comic Writers," p. 253), "the pasteboard machinery of a pantomime." 3. With respect to the Chatterton case, Miss Hawkins is wide of the truth by a whole climate. She dates Lord Orford's declension "in the public favor from the time when he resisted the imposition of Chatterton ;" and she thinks it "not the usual justice of the world to be angry at a resistance proved so reasonable." But, first, Lord Orford has *not* declined in the public favor : he ranks higher now than he did in Chatterton's lifetime, or his own : his reputation is the same in kind as the *genuine* reputation of Voltaire : both are very spirited memoir writers ; and, of the two, Lord Orford is the more brilliant. The critique of his posthumous memoirs by Miss Hawkins's brother, expresses his pretensions very ably. Secondly, if he *had* declined, it could not have been in the way supposed. Nobody blamed Lord Orford for resisting the imposition of Chatterton. He was right in refusing to be hoaxed : he was not right in detaining Chatterton's papers ; and if he did this, not through negligence or inattention, but presuming on Chatterton's rank (as Chatterton himself believed and told him), his conduct was infamous. Be this as it may, his treatment of Chatterton whilst living, was arrogant, supercilious, and with little or no sensibility to his claims as a man of genius ; of Chatterton when dead, brutal, and of inhuman hypocrisy ; he himself being one of the few men in any century who had practised at a mature age that very sort of forgery which in a boy of seventeen he represented as unpardonable. Did he, or did he not, introduce his own "Castle of Otranto" as a translation from an Italian MS. of one Onufrio Muralte ? Do I complain of that masquerading ? Not at all : but I say that the same indulgence, which shelters Horace Earl of Orford, justifies Chatterton.

NOTE 106. Page 556.

“Fillip me with a three-man beetle.” — *Falstaff, Henry IV.*

NOTE 107. Page 568.

Seriously, however, Mr. Hawkins's translation of Lord Erskine's celebrated punning epigram on Dr. Lettsom is “very clever,” as Miss Hawkins thinks it, and wants only a little revision. She is mistaken, however, in supposing that Lord Erskine meant to represent Dr. Lettsom “as illiterate:” the bad grammar was indispensable to the purpose of working the name — *I. Lettsom* — into the texture of the verse; which is accomplished with great ingenuity both in the English and the Greek.



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